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**FOLLOW YOUR FEET.**



**AS SOON AS** I learned Google had added seven of New Zealand's Great Walks to Street View, I was hooked. What a fabulous idea, I thought, being able to walk every step of the Routeburn, Rakiura and Heaphy without leaving the house!

Obviously it doesn't beat actually walking them in person, but fancy technology reaching a stage where everyone can see all these walks, at any stage, from any angle.

So I was a little surprised to find such negative comments about the development on social media. These comments made me re-think my initial enthusiasm at this new variation of a great tool.

I pondered the suggested downsides; the influx of tourists on these overcrowded walks, the decline of adventure, the domination of a global enterprise now seeping into our backcountry through cracks in the door. But my final conclusion was the same as my initial reaction, which was along the lines of 'woohoo – this is great!'

And here's why; I've yet to walk the Milford Track, so the first question that popped into my head was 'is the Milford really worth it, for those who have walked tracks like the Routeburn?' Ten minutes later, I had my answer – simply, yes, it is.

You may argue 'where's the adventure in that?' But walking the Milford's expensive, especially for someone considering a trip to New Zealand

from the opposite side of the globe. And no-one's *making* you check it out before you go – you can always keep it a surprise.

The new device may well attract more people to the Great Walks, but these walks are supremely popular anyway, and at least tourists will have a better understanding of the terrain than if they didn't check it on Street View first. It may even give people a reality check.

But the clincher for me is the joy this technology will bring. For many, this is as close as they'll ever get to walking such trails, either because their body won't allow them, their commitments are all-consuming, or they live too far away. For others, the gadget will provide fond memories of when they completed the trail in years past.

And who knows how important this historic documentation might prove in the future? If industry, bad habits or invasive creatures further destroy these wild areas, what better way to compare then-to-now than with a tool guiding you through these incredible landscapes at a more ecologically prosperous point in time.

I haven't yet heard an argument to negate these positives, so if you have one I'd be keen to hear from you.

Perhaps the images from Google will inspire some lovely photo ideas of your own. We're calling for entries to the 2016 Wilderness Photo Competition – see our website for details and keep



it in mind for your upcoming trips – you might just capture the winning image. And check out p20 for our masterclass in photographing mountain landscapes.

- Matthew Pike  
Deputy editor

#### E-newsletter

Wilderness Weekly is now being delivered by email. To get the latest in outdoor news, gear and trips of the week head to [www.wildernessmag.co.nz](http://www.wildernessmag.co.nz) to sign up.



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## THE POWER OF WILDERNESS

**WITH A FOUR-YEAR-OLD** daughter and a one-year-old son, opportunities for my husband and I to get out tramping have been limited in recent years. My last tramp was to Mt Pirongia three years ago, during which my boots fell apart and ended up being tied together with spectra cord.

However – at my suggestion! – my parents recently gifted my husband a subscription to *Wilderness* magazine for his birthday and we have been feeling inspired again. We had our first night away from both kids this month with an overnight tramp into Mangamuka Hut in the Kaimais. It was fantastic to just be ‘us’ and not ‘mum and dad’ for a night. Next on the list is to take my daughter on her first overnight tramp, the plan being to head into Peach Cove Hut (luckily, I bought and kept the August 2012 issue of *Wilderness* for its feature on family friendly tramps!). I hope to organise some girlfriends and their daughters to join the fun.

And for my husband and I, we are already organising the babysitters for Easter 2016 so we can do Waikaremoana. Once our son is a bit bigger, we’ll plan some family trips. In the meantime, we’ll keep reading *Wilderness* and getting ideas for the future!

– Jane de Ville, email

– Way to go Jane! Keep an eye out for our January 2016 issue where we publish another feature on top family trips to try. – AH

Jane receives a pair of Rab Latok Alpine Gaiters worth \$139.95 from the team at [www.outfitters.net.nz](http://www.outfitters.net.nz). Readers, send your letter to the editor for a chance to win.



## THANKS FOR THE TRAINING

**IN RESPONSE TO** the article ‘Evolve or Die’ (November 2015) regarding the restructuring of the Mountain Safety Council, I wish to relay my sincere gratitude to all members of the organisation for the training programmes they did run.

A serious horse riding accident resulting in spinal surgery had me living a life wrapped in ‘cotton wool’. But later in life, while raising children and running a dairy farm, I required constant physio. With encouragement from my physio and a member of the Geraldine Tramping Club, I joined the club in 1995. I became so much stronger and found a whole new and enjoyable world in my own backyard. My enthusiasm became infectious and soon my husband and daughters were joining me on day tramps.

I have taken MSC bushcraft and first aid courses run in our local area and the knowledge and confidence I gained was immense. The course material covered aspects not available within the tramping club as well as completing basic fundamentals that we could practise. I found the outdoor first aid section invaluable – the principles of prevention, then aid, with time a factor in aid response, are not only essential for tramping but for our farming operation as well. When I attended a farm safety course, the instructor was impressed with the teachings I had picked up in relation to this course.

I have completed one updated MSC training programme and my daughters completed

two each before attempting their Duke of Edinburgh expeditions. Each course has been extremely valuable and complementary to each other.

Though I have not undertaken the sometimes epic journeys often described in *Wilderness*, I thank all who inspired me and my family to appreciate and experience the beauty our country has to offer.

– Sharon Boulton, Geraldine

## HUGE POTENTIAL UP NORTH

**I COULDN’T BELIEVE** so many misconceptions could be included in correspondent Peter Dymock’s letter (Pigeon Post, November 2015).

I have lived and tramped for equal numbers of decades in both islands and I have personally enjoyed all of the Te Araroa Trail. I am one of the thousands of outdoor enthusiasts who appreciate tramping throughout the length of New Zealand with all the diversity our wonderful country offers.

Rather than taking up space in an exhaustive counter to individual points, it is recommended that the writer just reads the great variety of trip reports that appear month after month in this superb magazine and looks them up on maps to see what great New Zealand-wide coverage they provide, even outside the Queenstown area.

The Coromandel and Kaimai-Mamaku ranges have the potential to provide a long

## TRAIL CHAT

We asked readers if the Canterbury place names Niggerhead, Nigger Hill and Nigger Stream should be changed to Tawhai Hill, Kānuka Hills and Steelhead Stream respectively, as is currently being proposed by the Geographic Board.

Leave them as they are! Everyone needs to stop taking offence at unimportant things

– Abby Mes

If there ever is a case (and there are many) for reverting to the Maori name these should be at the forefront

– Andrew McCrorie

It’s pretty ugly that we still have these on our maps. Good call to use the Maori names instead

– Anna Brooke

Just put an ‘H’ in it like they did with Wanganui

– Sam James

Leave them as they are. Is it such a bad word?

I must live in a hole!

– Andrea Leighton

Definitely change the names. I would not hike on those mountains with the current names

– Brian Beckenbaugh

If enough people were really offended then it would have been changed long ago. Leave it be

– Luke Willis

Yes they should be replaced with smaller hills that are easier to climb

– Ricky French

multiday trail. Currently, the only publicly accessible long distance section is the seven-day Kaimai North South Route – unfortunately under-maintained and under-developed over the last few decades. Mud? Yes, but remember the knee deep sections of the Heaphy Track before serious money was spent on it? See what a popular walk (and ride) it is today as a result.

To convert the rough old Kaimai North South Route into the proposed Kaimai Ridgeway requires just three new huts and modest amounts of track surface protection, with the result being a multiday trail for the whole country to be proud of – a rugged range, superb bush and mountain streams, views of the Bay Of Plenty islands, across the hills and plains of the Waikato, to the central mountains and beyond to Mt Taranaki.

The thought that 1.4 million people should not be allowed to have suitable multiday backcountry options locally because the facilities would be overwhelmed is a curious concept – rather, the Kaimai Ridgeway should be seen as the beginning, not the end, of what this part of the country can offer.

– Tony Walton, President,  
Auckland Tramping Club





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# YOUR TRIPS, YOUR PIX



Sylvia, Sam, Luka and Jesse Johnson climbed Mt Dumblane near Hanmer Springs



Theresa Bowen crossed the three wire bridge over Stinking Creek, Fiordland NP

What did you get up to last weekend?



Martin and Izák Srubar enjoyed skipping stones on North Mavora Lake



Mattheus Elwood tramped windy Mt Holdsworth, Tararua FP



Matthew Dunlea tramped to the summit of Mt Misery, Nelson Lakes NP



Amanda and Kathryn Bunckenburg celebrated walking the St James Walkway



Amen, Gloria and Taemon Lee climbed the St Arnaud Range in Nelson Lakes NP



Paul Bromell visited Asbestos Cottage, Kahurangi NP

## SEND YOUR PIX



Get your photo published here to receive the Light My Fire 'Pack-up-Cup'. This compressible 260ml cup keeps drinks warm and protected from dirt and bugs with its tight and secure lid. Just fold it out and fill it up. More details at [ampro.co.nz](http://ampro.co.nz). Last Weekend submission criteria at [wildernessmag.co.nz](http://wildernessmag.co.nz)



Wellington Children's Hospital staff took their kids to Turere Lodge, Orongorongo Valley



Hannah and Steve August climbed Ben Lomond from Queenstown





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## NEIGH ARAROA TRAIL

Those attempting the Te Araroa Trail this summer might encounter four-legged compatriots. A team of Kaimanawa horses ridden by trainer Lou McNutt will head from Bluff to Cape Reinga in an epic nine-month trip.

McNutt is partaking in the solo mission to help increase adoptions for Kaimanawa horses and raise money for Running for Rangers – a group that runs marathons to improve the welfare of rangers protecting rhinos and elephants in Kenya.

She plans to carry provisions for 5-7 day sections and the horses will be fitted with special horseshoes reinforced with tungsten carbide on the heels and toes to cope with the long distances. The North Island will be predominantly along the coast whereas the South Island will be largely through high country stations.

McNutt would also be keen to hear from any landowners who wouldn't mind her stopping over for a night or two. McNutt plans to set off in early 2016. To see a map of her proposed route, visit [www.loumcnutt.com](http://www.loumcnutt.com).

**“When we started we just made one ‘small’ change to the original plan. We decided to aim to raise \$30 million over five years instead of \$1 million,”**

*Dr Mike Thorsen, co-founder of the newly-formed Endangered Species Foundation*

## CALLING ALL MAPAHOLICS

An exhibition showcasing a history of New Zealand maps has opened in Wellington.

The National Library of New Zealand, in Thorndon, will host *Unfolding the Map*

Highlights for trampers include an 1887 map of the proposed Tongariro National Park and a 1936 trampers' map of the Tararua. Other highlights include the first map of New Zealand drawn by Maori and charts from Captain Cook's voyages.

The exhibition is free to enter and is open 8.30am-5pm Monday to Saturday until August next year.



Rowan, Laura, Jaz and Tom at Cameron Hut

## CLIMB, FIX, FELL

A party of four climbers had a memorable – and active – Labour Weekend, topping out on Mt Arrowsmith, 2781m, making repairs to Cameron Hut and felling a stand of wilding pines in the Cameron Valley.

Jaz Morris, Rowan Cox, Tom McKellar and Laura Doughty experienced excellent conditions on the climb, located in Canterbury's Hakatere Conservation Park. Crevasses on the South Cameron Glacier were filled in and firm snow on the 40-50-degree 250m central couloir led them directly to the summit.

Making the most of the long weekend, on return to Cameron Hut they tidied up the interior and made minor repairs to the door, replacing a rattly, loose bolt using the hut's stash of tools.

On their walk out, they borrowed the hut's saw to fell a small stand of wilding pines 20 minutes from the hut. They managed to negotiate the spindly grass to cut down about 20 Douglas firs.

“There aren't that many places where the wilding pine issue is so easy for a single tramping party to solve,” said Morris. “If future parties repeat the process over the next couple of years, then the wilding pines in the area will be completely gone.”



An 1887 map of the proposed Tongariro National Park on display in the exhibition

## NEW GHOST ROAD

After nearly nine years of planning, fundraising and construction, the Old Ghost Road will finally be ready to be tramped or ridden in its completed form this month.

In total, 26,000 volunteer hours and more than 100,000 paid-for hours were clocked in efforts to complete the 85km trail.

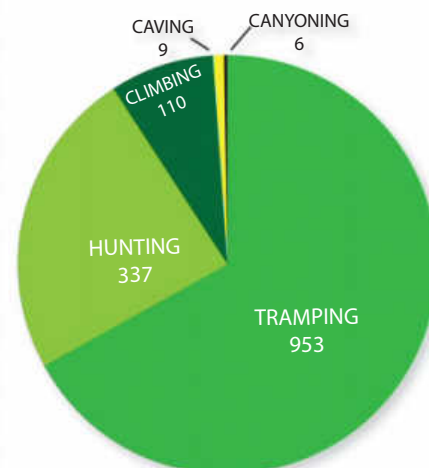
The Old Ghost Road is located in the Buller District of the West Coast and runs from Lyell to Seddonville. It's a grade four mountain bike ride and a 4-5 day tramping trip with six huts en route.

The trail will officially open at 2pm on December 12 at the NBS Theatre in Westport. Organisers have warned parts of the trail will remain closed until then to allow construction to be completed.



A momentous moment; the two diggers working on either side of the trail finally meet in the middle

SAROP (SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATION) STATS FOR RESCUES PER ACTIVITY FROM 2010/11-2013/14



WHILE TRAMPING CALL-OUTS LOOK HIGH, LANDSAR SAYS THE STATISTICS CORRELATE WITH THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE PARTICIPATING IN EACH ACTIVITY





Megan Sny

## TRIP PLANNING SPEED-DATING STYLE

Members of the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club sat down for all of 90 minutes recently to plan their summer tramping itinerary. The result? An incredibly busy calendar with a staggering 147 trips planned.

The club's communications officer Emily Shrosbree said highlights include a musical tramp, parts of Te Araroa Trail, a family Southern Crossing and walking in Paparoa National Park next Easter.

It wasn't all about getting boots on the ground though – seven pizzas were consumed over the course of the planning.

## THIS MONTH ON GARAGE TV....

Wilderness has partnered with Garage TV (Sky channel 77) to bring you these outdoor films in December

### WIDE BOYZ

SCREENS DECEMBER 5, 4PM

The world of offwidth crack climbing is a strange sub-culture rumoured to be dominated by bar-brawling dirt-bags. The climbing is tough, painful and bloody. English climbers Pete Whittaker and Tom Randall complete a two-year training regime before embarking on a tour of the USA, culminating in the first ascent of Century Crack, the world's hardest offwidth.



### VERTICAL SAILING GREENLAND

SCREENS DECEMBER 17, 8PM

Follow the adventures of the Wolfgang Climbing Team on a 45-day rock climbing expedition in the Canadian Arctic, a climbing and sailing expedition in Greenland and the Venezuelan Jungle. The crew received several film festival awards as well as the Piolet d'Or 2011 for showing great style, high technical level and huge camaraderie during their expeditions.

- Details of these and other outdoor films screening on Garage TV can be found at [www.garagemovies.co.nz](http://www.garagemovies.co.nz)





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## DOC STAFF TAKE INDUSTRIAL ACTION

"DOC staff don't take action lightly, but they are finding it increasingly hard to continue to do their jobs when their employer doesn't value them," Erin Polaczuk, Public Service Association national secretary, when explaining why 1500 DOC staff began industrial action on November 4



## LANDSAR CHIEF MOVES ON

Harry Maher, who has been director of LandSAR for the past three-and-a-half years, is now leaving the organisation.

Maher, who developed and deployed a safety management system for 3500 volunteers during his tenure at LandSAR, will now become DOC's director for health and safety.

He had previously worked in various positions for DOC over 22 years and will take up the new post this month.

Director and chair of LandSAR, Rex Hendry, said Maher can be justifiably proud of his achievements with the organisation. "In this time, the board, with Harry



Maher enjoying a break at Tarn Basin, in the Craigieburn Range

working alongside, has developed a strong and clear direction for the organisation and has established a range of projects to resolve long-standing and current issues."

**442,200** THE NUMBER OF STEPS MATT JENKE WALKED TO CAPTURE SEVEN GREAT WALKS FOR GOOGLE STREET VIEW

## WILDERNESS WORD

Complete the crossword and re-arrange the letters in the shaded squares to spell out the hidden solution. Send your answer, with your name and address, by December 21 to: wildernessword@lifestylepublishing.co.nz, or WildernessWord, PO Box 251566, Pakuranga, Auckland 2140. All correct entries will go in the draw to win one of five Buff Original Headwear.

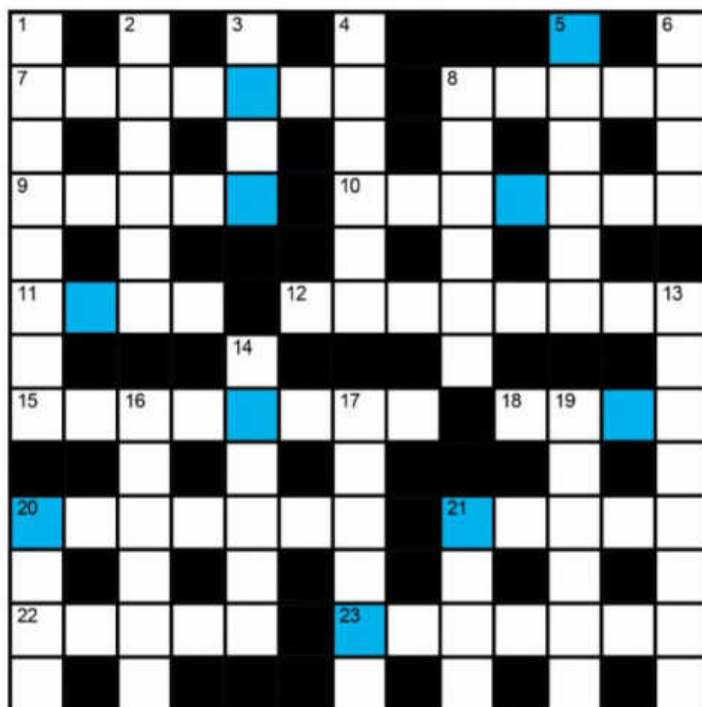


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### Across

7. Something to fuel your cooker (7)
8. Type of tree found in Nelson Lakes National Park (5)
9. Measure water depth (5)
10. NZ river that flows from King Country to Tasman Sea (7)
11. Spot this mysterious creature on Himalayan trek? (4)
12. Trees like kahikatea and rimu (8)
15. Risk resulting from being in severe wilderness conditions without adequate protection (8)
18. Poetic word for small land mass in sea (4)
20. Improve this sort of fitness in preparation for tramp (7)
21. Map used by 8 Down (5)
22. Clean unpolluted water is this (5)
23. Mt \_\_\_\_\_ - NZ's third highest mountain (7)



### Down

1. Filmy fern in NZ bush is this type of plant (8)
2. Migratory grasshopper seen in NZ (6)
3. Clothing for particular purpose - like tramping gear, eg (4)
4. NZ lake in Canterbury region (6)
5. Handy gadget - EPIRB, eg (6)
6. Maori name for NZ blue duck (4)
8. Marine wilderness enthusiast (6)
13. Takes cover from bad weather (8)
14. Line on map connecting points of same atmospheric pressure (6)
16. Person who carries supplies for mountaineering expedition (6)
17. What river levels do once heavy rain has stopped (6)
19. Coastal freshness! (3,3)
20. Rock formation like at Coromandel's Cathedral Cove, eg (4)
21. Temporary wilderness home (4)

**Hidden Solution:** NZ wildlife conservation success story (10)  
**November's hidden solution:** Energy food





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# TRACKS CAMERA ACTION

Matt Jenke must have pinched himself when given the job of walking New Zealand's best trails for Google. **Matthew Pike** asks if the reality matches the dream

**T**he man I used to be most envious of was Dan Carter; blessed with good looks and absurd natural talent, he gets to play rugby every day of his life and everyone loves him for it. But now there's a man who has exceeded Carter in my envy stakes.

Two years ago Matt Jenke landed the sort of job any trampster would bite their own arm off to do.

Google tasked Jenke to walk seven of the nine Great Walks with a multi-squillion dollar camera strapped to his back. All he had to do was remain upright at all times and remember to flick the 'on' switch before setting off.

The camera, called the Google Trekker,

was created by Steve Silverman, who used to create cameras for expeditions to Mars. It's a variant of those used in the Google Street View cars, protruding more than half a metre above Jenke's head. At 18kg it's heavier than many multiday packs and its shape makes for an unusual experience.

"It's just as comfy as a normal pack, but it's quite top heavy and there's a bit of a swing," says the 28-year-old from Titirangi.

Jenke had to ensure the camera avoided low branches so debris didn't land on the lens. But he also had to stay upright, meaning bending over wasn't an option. Instead, an awkward squat was required.

The Heaphy Track presented the worst

example of this, as an area shortly after the swingbridge at Lewis Hut was overgrown at the time Jenke walked the trail. This meant squatting for a couple of hundred metres which Jenke describes as "frustrating".

The Heaphy, being the longest of the seven tracks, presented logistical issues, as the camera only has a battery life of around six hours and there were only three sets of batteries.

"We tried to recharge them using a generator but this didn't recharge them fully." It did, however, provide them with just enough power to capture the whole trail.

Another logistical dilemma was the weather, which affected all the trails, one way or another. On the Abel Tasman, he had to



wait for three days for the heavens to close after completing day one and he needed to complete the Rakiura Track in one day because rain was forecast on both days either side.

There was the odd wobble too. On the Heaphy, a swingbridge was being repaired so he tried to ford the river himself. "I was standing on a rock in the water when my foot slipped and I was suddenly down on my knees," explains Jenke. "That was the dodgiest moment; I could easily have gone head over heels. To have properly submerged the trekker wouldn't have been a good look."


Jenke was accompanied on each trip by Peter Hiemstra from DOC, who carried a 25kg pack with pretty much all the food and equipment they needed. Hiemstra needed to stay a good distance behind Jenke to ensure he wasn't in each shot – a plan not always entirely successful, as Hiemstra later realised he isn't as good at hide and seek as he thought.

Despite the odd logistical headache and a tree squat or two too many, the job has more than lived up to expectation for Jenke. "I couldn't believe my luck when I was told I could do this as a job," he says. "I actually became quite attached to the trekker [the camera] very quickly. I gave it a name, calling it Lucy."

One of the reasons Jenke was picked for the job was his good fitness base. This was highlighted when his cousin pulled out of the Auckland Marathon three weeks prior to the event. He gave his ticket to Jenke who, without training, ran it in 3:00:40 before proceeding on the three-hour Mangawhai Head Cliff Walk for Google that afternoon.

Tongariro Northern Circuit and the Whanganui River remain the only two Great Walks not yet completed by the Google Trekker camera, for cultural and logistical reasons.

But Jenke is far from finished with his work. As well as the Great Walks he's been tasked with completing a series of short walks around the country, including trails on Matiu/Somes Island in Wellington Harbour, Bridal Veil Falls in Waikato and Karangahake Gorge in the Kaimais.

Soon there could be a whole network of tracks across the country that can be virtually walked from your computer. And Jenke is keeping his fingers crossed that Google may wish to use the same camera to document the entire Te Araroa Trail in the future. If this becomes a reality, my jealousy of Jenke will rise another notch. 

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# HANGING OUT IN THE HILLS

The kiss of the sun's warming rays on your skin is a simple pleasure, but how much skin is too much? **Chris Maclean** explains the appeal of tramping in the buff

**W**hat is it about nudity that interests people so much? When Shaun Barnett and I were putting together our book *Tramping, A New Zealand History*, we suspected the section about nude tramping might provoke a response. But we had no idea it would have the media-mesmerising impact that it did.

No sooner was the book released than Campbell Live contacted our publicist, asking if we were prepared to tramp nude for their cameras.

"No, we weren't," we replied.

Then our publisher suggested a nude tramp to garner publicity for the book. Again, we refused.

A few weeks later, we were invited to 'Play Favourites' with Kim Hill on her Radio New Zealand programme. Our conversation with her proceeded smoothly, once we had persuaded her that tramping wasn't all pain and suffering, when she interrupted her planned questioning to ask us about tramping naked. Someone had rung the show while we were on air to suggest she 'ask Chris about nude tramping'.

And with great glee she did. In some detail. For days afterwards friends, family, and even neighbours let me know they now saw me in a different light.

So what is nude tramping and who does it? Well, I do and so do a few other trampers, but it's very much a minority pursuit. It is a great feeling, an invigorating experience that is sensual rather than sexual; it's about wind on the skin while sauntering along the tussock tops or the warmth of the sun on your body while tramping down a riverbed. Sometimes walking, sometimes swimming.

Yet I don't get to tramp nude as often as I would like because favourable circumstances are rare. Obviously, the weather needs to be conducive. Shedding clothes is easy when

it's fine and warm but neither pleasant nor practical when it's windy or wet. That drastically limits opportunities in New Zealand's tempestuous climate.

Then you have to be in the right place at the right time. Nude tramping on a bush track is risky, as other walkers can suddenly appear, leaving no time to get your shorts on.

It's better done on a fine day on the tops when you can see people approaching from up to a kilometre away.

This is important because the legality, or otherwise, of nude tramping is unclear. Public nudity that offends others can be viewed as a criminal offence. A man made the headlines a few years ago for riding a bike in the nude, but because no one complained, the police took no action other than to issue him a warning for not wearing a helmet!

In the bush or the hills, the prospect of running into children or others who may be offended is a real risk, although my greater worry is encountering homophobic hunters who might just be tempted to dispense with this 'insult to Kiwi blokes'. Either way, a degree of caution is advisable.

To enjoy nude tramping, you must be relaxed and if you are worried about encountering others, it's best to stay dressed. But there're vast areas of the backcountry where, chances are, you won't meet anyone. And you can often sense this intuitively.

Timing helps. Weekdays are often good, but weekends in the hills are more popular, and the same applies to public holidays, so some reticence may be required at such times. I climbed Nelson's popular Mt Arthur some years ago in the nude on a weekday and encountered no one. Yet, when I returned several months later on a Saturday during the summer holidays, I kept my clothes on – a sensible precaution as so many people crowded the summit that it resembled a cocktail party.

Climbing Mt Arthur can be easily achieved


in a day, meaning you only need a day pack. Tramping nude with a much heavier pack can be uncomfortable as the straps and waist belt dig into unprotected flesh.

Then there's the need for sun protection, especially for body parts not usually exposed. In our book, we described how in the 1930s the young Auckland student Elsie Locke (later to become a prominent peace activist), got sunburned in some unusual places while tramping nude in the Waitakerees.

During that decade, it was student Ormond Wilson who introduced nude tramping to New Zealand. Before the war, he had studied in England and travelled extensively in Germany, where nudity in the outdoors is much more common. When he returned to New Zealand, Wilson introduced the idea to fellow progressives such as Bill Sutch and his partner Morva Williams.

Although it has always remained a minority practice here, it is so much more common in Europe that when the Swiss recently got fed up with so many Germans tramping nude in their mountains, the Germans responded by developing an 18km nude tramping trail in the Harz Mountains. There, clothed walkers are the oddity!

Wherever it occurs, nude tramping is an activity that goes beyond sensuality to evoke the essence of being in the outdoors.

We concluded the section on naked tramping in our tramping history with these thoughts from Otago writer and outdoorsman, Brian Turner: 'When some trampers shed their clothes in the mountains and jumped into clear cold pools, I always got the feeling that they were shedding more than just garments. This was a 'statement', a nod to Adam's nakedness when he was created. Getting back to nature improved one's chances of salvation. It was also just bloody great to feel so fully alive. If this wasn't freedom, what was?' 



# HOW MUCH FUEL LEFT IN THE CANISTER?

This conundrum has left many a multiday trapper pondering whether a morning coffee is wise, given the risk of cold dehydrated meals for the rest of the trip.

Of course, careful planning ensuring more fuel than you'll need is the obvious answer to making sure you don't run out. But there is one little trick to give you a reasonable estimate of what's left in the canister:



❶ For this trick you'll need two canisters of the same make and size – one full, one empty



❷ Place the empty one into a pot of water



❸ Using a permanent marker pen, note where the waterline is and mark this level in the same spot on the full canister



❹ Place the full canister into the same pot of water



❺ Mark the waterline so you now have two marks – one for full, one for empty

When on the trip, place the canister into water to see roughly how much fuel you have left. It'll act like a fuel gauge with the waterline falling the more fuel you use

## EASY, HANDY KNOT

The bowline knot is a straightforward, secure loop that's useful for tying a tarp or hammock to a tree. It's also useful in a rescue situation, looping rope around a victim's chest and tying a bowline that won't undo or tighten.

The knot's strong when there's weight on it, but easy to untie when there's not.

❶ Wrap the rope around the object you're tying to, then create a small loop, leaving enough rope to thread through the loop twice

❷ Thread the rope through the loop from the top

❸ Pass the end behind and back up through the same loop (think 'through the rabbit hole, around the tree and back up through the rabbit hole')

❹ Pull tight



## FITNESS

### EXTENDED SIDE ANGLE POSE

The extended side angle pose stretches the sides, back and shoulders while still working on balance and strengthening the legs.

❶ Start from a lunge with your left foot forward.

Turn your right heel in and down to the floor so your foot is turned out at about a 45 degree angle

❷ Your front left toes should be forward and the foot in line with the arch or heel of the right foot

❸ Lift your chest and hands, reaching your left arm forward and right arm back

❹ Your left knee is bent and should be either directly over or behind your ankle. Make sure the knee is tracking straight ahead

❺ The right leg is straight, but

don't lock the knee

❻ Bring the left elbow on to the front knee, with the palm facing up. Press your elbow down and lift your chest up

❼ Let your right hand swing past the ground and stretch forward with the palm facing down

❽ Relax both shoulders away from the ears. Keep stretching through your right fingers

❾ Hold this pose for a few breaths, then bring both hands down either side of your feet, lift your back heel and return to your lunge

❿ Then change legs



TONY GAZLEY



# HOW TO CARRY YOUR PLB

You should carry your PLB at all times, but where's best?

After a recent discussion on our Facebook page about this very issue, we decided to ask Mike Hill from the Rescue Coordination Centre for his advice.

He suggests to place your PLB either in a zipped pocket of your trousers or shorts, or in a pouch attached to your belt. He says camera and sports shops will provide suitable pouches: "These are not made specifically for beacons but there is such a variety that your beacon will fit into at least one of them," explains Hill.



Make sure the beacon is somewhere you can reach in an emergency

If these options aren't comfortable, then Hill suggests the next best option is a securely shut shirt, fleece or jacket pocket (whichever you're most likely to continue wearing). Wearing the beacon around your neck is also a good place to carry it so long as you're sure it won't pose a snag or choking hazard.

"Our advice is that you carry the beacon where you can get to it in an emergency," says Hill. "The last thing you want is the beacon to be in something that you may be separated from."



Around your head is fine so long as it doesn't present a choking hazard

WILD CUISINE by Mark Banham

## ZESTY QUINOA SALAD



It's pretty easy to get into a rut with your backcountry food: rice, pasta, rice, pasta, repeat. But if you want to mix things up a bit, sometimes it's just a matter of exploring a new grain, like quinoa. This quinoa salad is perhaps a little more complicated than you might want for an expedition meal, but for a weekender it's perfect.

### PROFILE

Serves: 2  
Weight: 1200g  
Volume: 1000ml  
Calories: 1300  
Cost: \$15.50  
Cooking time: 20min  
Fuel: 175ml white spirit, or 60g camping gas\*

\*Based on an MSR Whisperlite burning white spirit at sea level.

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup mixed quinoa  
1 head broccoli, chopped  
2 sliced smoked chicken breasts  
1tsp heaped ground coriander  
3tbsp olive oil  
2 spring onions  
2tbsp fresh mint  
3tbsp red wine vinegar  
3tbsp pumpkin seeds  
4 sliced button mushrooms\*  
4tbsp Greek yogurt  
4tsp harissa paste  
Zest of one lemon

### METHOD

Cook the quinoa as per the instructions, then drain and set aside. Likewise for the broccoli. Sauté the mushrooms in a small amount of olive oil. Mix the quinoa in a bowl along with the mushrooms, mint, lemon zest, coriander and spring onions. Drizzle with olive oil and red wine vinegar. Top with the smoked chicken and broccoli, add a few good dollops of yogurt and harissa paste and serve.

\*If you'd like to save a bit of time and weight you can substitute dried mushrooms and just soak them for 10 minutes beforehand.

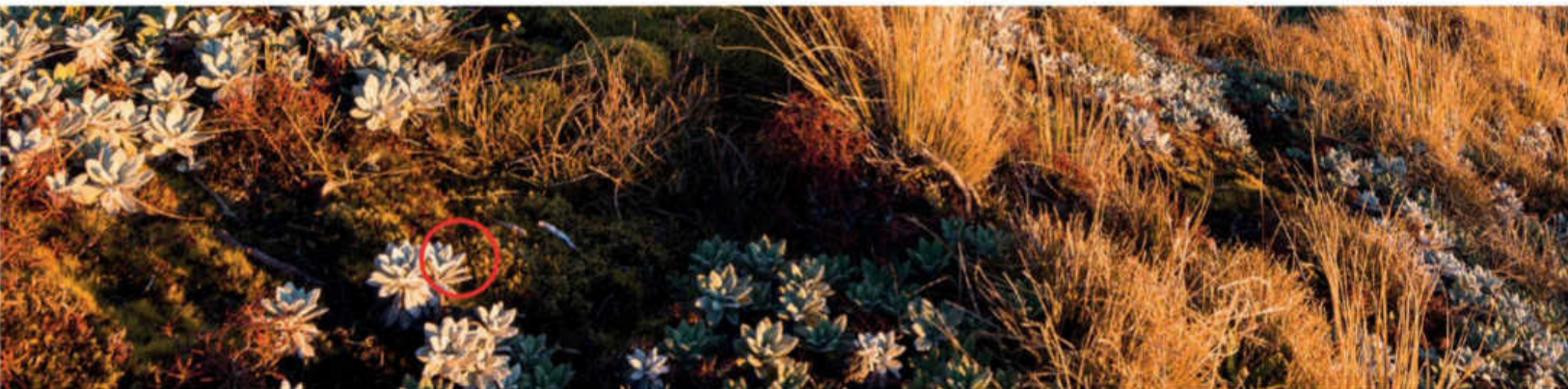




**Location** Armstrong Saddle, above Sunrise Hut, Ruahine Forest Park  
**Settings** ISO 100, f11, 1/20 second

# MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPES

Learn how to take magnificent mountain landscapes. By **Richard Young**



## GET ONTO THE TOPS

Photography in the mountains is often about capturing the grand landscape and sweeping vistas full of rugged peaks. The best place for this is from high vantage points or the top of a peak offering a view out over the horizon. You could also include some foreground to give the image some depth.



## HEAD OUT AT SUNSET

One great thing about being in the hills is the amazing warm light you get by being up high at sunset – try to make use of this to illuminate foreground subjects and the tops of distant peaks.




## COMPOSING THE LANDSCAPE

Avoid putting the horizon in the centre of the image as it can be a little boring. If you have some nice foreground, put the horizon higher to make more of this feature. On the other hand, if the sky is full of colour put your horizon lower to capture more of the sky.



## GET A SHARP SHOT

To get everything in focus from the foreground to peaks on the horizon, use a small aperture (f11-f22). If you are photographing in low light at the end of the day, you will need to use a tripod or select a higher ISO (400-800) to get a shutter speed fast enough for a sharp image. 

- Richard Young is a Wellington-based photographer running photography workshops in Tongariro National Park



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# CHARMING CAMPSITE

Dart Hut campsite, Mt Aspiring National Park

**A**lthough lesser-known than the nearby Routeburn Track, the Rees-Dart offers great tramping through a wide range of different landscapes – from lush meadows and gentle streams, to rocky alpine landscapes, dense beech forests and glaciers.

With a large landslide and severe erosion around Sandy Bluff closing that section of the Dart Track, the Dart Hut campsite can currently only be accessed from the Rees Valley or, for the adventurous, via the Matukituki Valley and Cascade Saddle. 

- Jingyi Tan

Dart Campsite with Dart Hut in the middle distance



## WILD FILE

**Access** Raspberry Creek car park west of Wanaka, or the Rees Valley Road north of Glenorchy

**Grade** Moderate

**Time** 2 days

**Map** CA11, CA10, CB10





The Nano-Air™ Jacket. Yet another reason to pack it. Sean Villanueva O'Driscoll and Nico Favresse on Ikerasak Peak in midnight light, Greenland. **BENJAMIN DITTO** © 2015 Patagonia, Inc.



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## SHADES OF GREEN

Tauanui Valley, Aorangi Forest Park

**T**he Wairarapa's Aorangi Forest Park often gets overlooked by trampers, who are naturally drawn to the much larger Tararua Forest Park. However, the Aorangi Range boasts some fine tramping, and often – especially when one of the notorious nor-westers is blowing – experiences better weather. Lying in the rain-shadow of the Aorangi and Rimutaka Range, the vegetation is notably different too.

One autumn I headed into the Tauanui Valley, on the park's western fringes, destined for the six-bunk Tauanui Hut set in a clearing about halfway up.

As I'd set off just after dawn, the slanting light of the early morning sun lit the forest, illuminating the various shades of green and I paused to take this photograph. Such places may lack the scale and grandeur of the Southern Alps, or indeed the Tararua tops, but they have their own, subtle beauty. 🌿

- Shaun Barnett



### WILD FILE

**Access** From Whakatomotomo Road, off Lake Ferry Road. Trampers are best to avoid the valley during the roar (March and April), as this is the favourite time for hunters to use the area.

**Grade** Easy

**Time** 2.5-3hr to hut

**Map** BQ33





Forest in Tauanui  
Valley, Aorangi  
Forest Park



# See More... HUT BOOKS

Hut books are not just informative – they can be downright fascinating and hilarious

**T**he humble hut book is often the first thing a trumper looks through at the end of a day's walk.

They serve several important purposes. First and foremost, of course, they provide a record of trampers' intentions, which may prove invaluable in the event something goes wrong. Search and Rescue teams rely on hut book entries to help narrow their search for a missing person.

Secondly, the hut book offers information for others using the hut. Are there obstacles or dangers on the track ahead, recorded by trampers coming in the opposite direction? Perhaps there might be good advice on an off-track route you hadn't considered.

Thirdly, it provides a valuable record of those using the hut for DOC staff or other groups that manage the hut. How much use does the hut get, and by whom? Are the visitors mainly hunters, trampers or climbers? How long do they stay? Have users recorded problems that need fixing: a leaky roof, a rodent invasion, or a loose windowpane?

Lastly, the hut book is a place where you might learn something about the history of the hut, chuckle over a funny anecdote, or enjoy an inspirational quote from someone.

During the 1980s, I remember several log books in Southern Alps' huts that had entries written in stunning black Gothic script – penned by a pair doing a long traverse. The occasional visitor might even use the hut book as a canvas for their artwork. In the past decade or so, many hut books in the Nelson and Marlborough region have been graced by the artwork of trumper Sonia Roxburgh. Another artist, Sue Wild, made a drawing in the Chaffey Hut book (see photo).

Naturally, hut books are replaced when full, and the more popular the hut, the quicker the turnover. Where do they all go? Many have been lost or destroyed, but DOC often keeps retired hut books, and some of the most venerable are found in institutions like museums, libraries or club archives.

The three huts featured here have particularly interesting hut books.

- Shaun Barnett



Drawing by artist Sue Wild in the Chaffey Hut logbook

## 1 - SHUTES HUT, RUAHINE FOREST PARK

Shutes Hut, built by Alex Shute in 1920, is a rare example of a North Island stone hut. Shute was a rabbitier who worked for many years in the area and was something of a hermit. In 1956, several years after Shute had died, hunter Lester Masters installed a hut book and case at Shutes Hut. That original one became full in the 1980s, when another hunter, Paul Sanderson, donated the lovely hardback tome still in use today. Yet another hunter, the late great Tony Gates, photocopied the original 1956-1981 hut book, and left a copy at Shutes. So trampers who now visit can read over both volumes, which together span nearly 70 years of history. Wonderful.

## 2 - CHAFFEY HUT, COBB VALLEY, KAHURANGI NATIONAL PARK, GOLDEN BAY

The historic Chaffey Hut, first built by Forest Service ranger Jack McBurney in the early 1950s, recently got a makeover by members of the Golden Bay branch of the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association, aided by DOC's master hut restorer John Taylor. They did an exceedingly faithful job of restoring the hut to its original condition, with minor improvements, and it's no wonder the current hut book brims with praise for their efforts – and some nice artwork.

## 3 - SIR ROBERT HUT, MUNGO VALLEY, WEST COAST

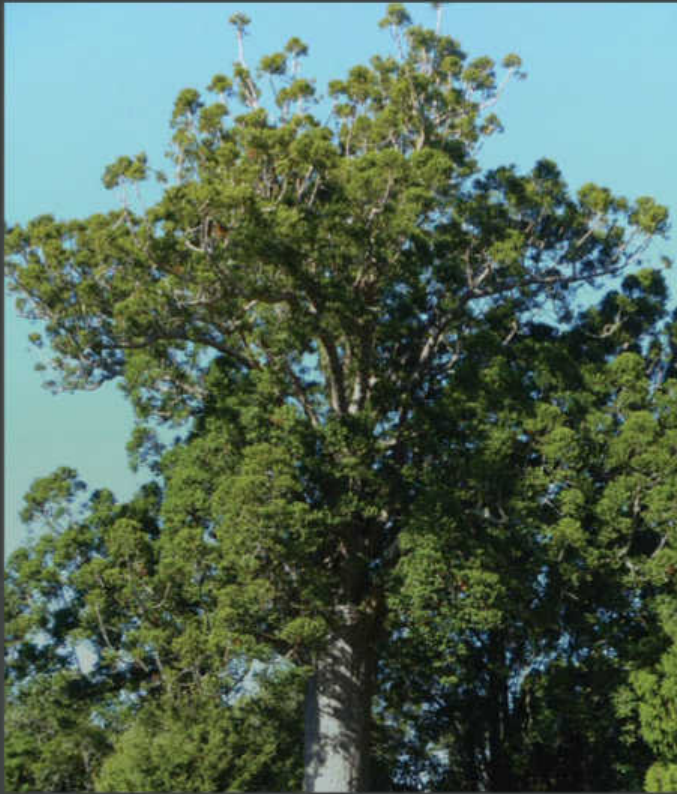
Sir Robert Hut is so seldom visited that the hut book has rarely been replaced. Between 1983 and 2007, for example, just 61 people had visited the hut, averaging only 2-3 per year. In the years 1994 and 1995, no one visited at all! That's probably because reaching the hut is no easy task, and requires at least 3-4 days of tough tramping through the backblocks of Hokitika. Any hut book that spans this number of years always has stories of epics, savage weather and tramping that tested the party to its limits. The Sir Robert Hut book is full of them.





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# WHY ADVENTURE MATTERS

The glory of climbing mountains pales into insignificance when compared to the true value of outdoor adventures – teaching your children about risk, writes **Andrew Magness**



Andrew Magness and his sons contemplate another adventure beneath the gaze of Mitre Peak

**F**ifteen years ago I was obsessed with adventure. In fact, the third decade of my life was pretty much defined by it. I started out as a climber – questing all over my birth continent of North America and occasionally beyond for rock and ice and wild, vertiginous places. I built my life around these pursuits and they gave me my sense of self. I became attached to my exploits and my accomplishments, and wore my epics like badges of courage. To be honest, I felt superior to non-adventurers. Adventuring was what mattered – not fancy cars, nice clothes, good jobs, or anything else. Weekends measured in metres gained, kilometres paddled, or pitches climbed trumped those measured in number of beers consumed or football games watched. I didn't understand the way 'other' people lived. Adventuring, more than school and university, provided my education.

I learned about finances. I mastered the art of dirt-bagging, discovering that \$20 in the hand of a good dirtbagger was worth at least \$100 in the hands of anyone else.

I learned about reality. I came to understand that suffering is a part of life that cannot be avoided, but also that perspective can take away its sting and bite and even domesticate it into something useful.

I learned about love. I faced the difficult challenges of choosing between lonely summer evenings high on sun-kissed mountain faces or stir crazy summer mornings staring right through an adoring partner.

I gained strength, courage, wisdom, ingenuity and resourcefulness. I grappled with failure and developed humility, then soared from success and grew in confidence. Sometimes all of this would come in a single climb.

This education was revisited again and again, season after season. The classroom changed over time: big walls gave way to snow capped mountains which flowed into rivers. There were extended learning periods (expeditions that lasted weeks) but also intensive courses (multiday adventure races and other endurance efforts). Over time, I grew to be almost fearless, secure in my ability to take on, or at least attempt, almost anything. I viewed challenge not only as an opportunity to succeed over difficulty, but also as an opportunity to learn from failure, the best teacher, when success was not in the cards.

But nine years ago everything changed and I became a father. And in the intervening years, I've realised that pretty much everything I thought and felt before fatherhood, well... it changed too. As I've watched my two sons

grow, I've come to recognise that perhaps the most important part of my adventure education was something I hadn't even thought of before – a skill I'd mastered that would have a profound impact on my kids' lives, whether or not they decided to climb or paddle or even go camping. I understood and appreciated the value of risk.

The truth is that life is hard and failure is a part of that hardship. Much of our larger culture seems to be risk averse, behaving as if identifying risk for the purpose of avoiding it is the proper course of action. But the best sweetness in life is tied to risk – asking the girl to dance, quitting the job you hate to go for one you love, or picking your way along the talus-covered knife edge ridge at sunset. Risk always includes the possibility of failure and failure should be a part of everyone's education. Both risk

assessment skills and risk taking confidence are qualities essential for the richest and most fulfilling life.

And as a parent I naturally want this sort of life for my kids. My years of studentship at 'Adventure University' and the subsequently earned PHD in 'managed risk taking' is paying unforeseen dividends now I am a dad. Because I have adventured, my kids climb really high in trees and on roofs, walk on railings and boulder hop across (semi) rushing rapids. They are encouraged to do these things. Because I have taken risks and developed confidence in my own ability to manage those risks, they get to begin their own education in risk management at an early age. Because I have learned to trust myself when deciding what I am capable of (as opposed to relying on the opinions of others) I am more able to allow them to act on similar beliefs in themselves.

It is my ability to provide a proper education in risk to my boys – and not the glory of the mountain summit – that I now realise will be the most important legacy afforded by that passion for adventure.

And that is why adventure matters. 

- Andrew Magness is a self proclaimed jack-of-all-trades adventurer, whose most recent mission has been a spontaneous move from the USA to Te Anau with his wife and two sons.



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# GIVING YOUR KIDS THE BOOT

Buying expensive tramping boots for your children can be a big ask, but, as **Jo Stilwell** discovers, good boots can go a long way

Alice is all smiles after borrowing her mother's boots

I remember the exact incident that prompted a discussion around buying expensive tramping boots for our kids.

We had been on the top of Mt Starveall in Mt Richmond Forest Park for a couple of hours, taking lunch and playing with the kids among the tussock in the hot sun. When it was time to put our boots back on and continue, my daughter Alice asked if she could give my boots a try. Despite being just 10 years old, her foot size had recently caught up with mine.

I was less than enthusiastic. I had just purchased a beautiful – and expensive – pair of Meindl boots that fitted and worked perfectly for my feet. I frequently got blisters while tramping and no matter how many different kinds of boots I tried, how well I attempted to wear them in or what combination of socks I wore, my bony heels always managed to rub themselves raw. I tried Vaseline, wads of sheep's wool and every type of tape and plaster on the market, but the only thing that worked was discovering these particular boots. I didn't want to give them up, but, in the spirit of being a good mother, I reluctantly let her try them on.

She loved them and wanted to keep wearing them, but I wasn't *that* good a mother. I promptly took them back but did experience a slight pang of guilt as the difference in comfort and support between her boots and mine were stark. It sparked a discussion between my husband David and I about the kind of tramping boots we would get our

kids in the future.

From the get-go we had placed an emphasis on putting our children in boots. They both had hypermobile joints and were prone to spraining ankles, so we bought them leather boots as soon as they could fit. When we had tried them in sturdy walking shoes and less supportive boots, multiple sprained ankles resulted.


But it was obvious my boots were far superior to theirs and, though expensive, we decided to buy Alice the same make of boot as mine before her next tramp. We justified the extra expense by knowing that when she grew out of them, I could wear them. Our youngest daughter Mackenzie was also going through the same blister problem as me, having inherited my bony feet. So when she could fit the smallest size of our favourite brand of boot, we didn't hesitate to get her a pair as well.

Did it seem ridiculous at the time, spending hundreds of dollars on a pair of boots when her feet were still growing? Yes. I'm sure Graeme, from our local outdoor store, rubbed his hands in glee when he saw me enter the shop, kids in tow. But any boots we purchased for the children have been on multiple sets of feet, as they have been shared between Alice, Mackenzie and me, and also lent to friends, so I believe we got our money's worth. Graeme hasn't seen the kids for a few years now as their feet have finally stopped growing. And their ankle joints stabilised as they got older, so they

also had the option to wear a lighter boot if they wanted.

Not everyone likes to wear leather tramping boots or put their kids in them. A friend of mine tells me her children always wear sneakers when tramping and as a family they have covered some pretty rough terrain. So what worked for us certainly won't work for everybody. However, I would still have bought expensive boots for our kids even if their ankles weren't so shonky. Our priority was to provide them with footwear that gave them comfort and confidence so we could do the types of trips that appealed to David and I. We wanted to wander up untracked streams, spend time on the tops, walk in the snow and not always be constrained to tramping in good weather. And because we weren't prepared to tramp in sneakers (or even lightweight boots) in winter, on slippery tussock or difficult scree slopes, we didn't think we should expect the kids to either. This was even more important when they started carrying heavier packs.

Kids don't need expensive tramping boots to go tramping, but we've found every cent we've spent on boots well worth it.

It often amuses me when we're packing the truck for a tramp and the value of all our boots combined exceeds the value of our vehicle. I suppose some people choose to drive fancy cars; we prefer to spend our money on quality, long-lasting tramping boots – even for the kids. 



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A narrow rock gut  
above the Matakītaki  
River East Branch



# KEEPING UP WITH CHAMOIS

Heading off the marked track can lead to unexpected encounters.

**David Dawkins** finds more than just steep passes and rugged river valleys on a variation of a South Island classic

**T**he chamois had a nonplussed gaze. His large eyes questioning why I was intruding on his alpine domain.

Having previously only seen these flighty creatures scampering across distant mountain faces, I stood immobile trying to blend with the shattered rock of a steep gully high in Nelson Lakes National Park.

I held my breath, expecting the chamois to turn tail but, he continued his assessment until suddenly it had seen enough and bounded up an imaginary path in the rock, leaving us privileged to have had a close encounter with this high country rarity.

On a week-long trip between St Arnaud and Lewis Pass, this was just one of the experiences that arose from heading off the beaten track.

This classic tramp in the northern Southern Alps has increased in popularity since becoming part of the Te Araroa Trail. Anyone making the trek will become familiar with the acronyms TA NOBO or TA SOBO (Te Araroa northbound or southbound) and can enjoy sharing huts with a range of international walkers.

Rather than follow the Te Araroa route up the Sabine Valley, over Waiau Pass and down the flats of the Waiau River, my father Chris and I selected a more challenging route that took in five alpine passes and the Matakītaki Valley.

A leg-busting ascent of Mt Robert to start the trip was the perfect test for long dormant muscles, but we were rewarded with wide-ranging views over the pristine waters of Lake Rotoiti and across to the St Arnaud Range.

The sun beat down mercilessly as we forged along the rocky ridge, which was alive with trampers young and old heading to or

from Lake Angelus.

Youth was out in force at Angelus Hut where two young families had set up residence. We enjoyed a late lunch as a gaggle of children raced around. It was a far cry from my last visit when the hut was a skeletal foundation whipped by snow and the only company a very cold builder.

The lake is an idyllic spot to lounge away an afternoon but we had a lot of ground to cover so we hefted our packs and headed to Sunset Saddle.

As we made the haul to the saddle, a lone traveller slogged along behind us. We paused at the saddle for the tramper, a visitor from Germany, and as a trio we scrambled to the summit of Angelus Peak.

The high point offered an amazing view of Lake Angelus. Entrapped by a jagged ring of rock pinnacles with steep scree slopes descending to the water's edge, the lake seemed to change colour from deep blues to vibrant greens as the late afternoon sun swung overhead.

Eventually, we began the rocky descent to Hopeless Creek. Nestled at the base of the barren slab slopes, the small lake at the head of the creek always takes my breath away and is a peaceful place to camp.

We were staying at Hopeless Hut though, so negotiated the waterfall cascading from the lake and made our way through the bush to the hut.

The next morning, with a short day to Cupola Hut, we set a leisurely pace to the Travers Valley. The Travers is one of my favourite spots with beech forest blanketing the valley floor beside the steady flow of the river. Far ahead, Mt Travers towered snowy and menacing.

While the journey to Cupola Hut is short as the bird flies, the climb from the valley floor is arduous and those muscles not fully

tested the previous day received a vigorous workout. But the sweat and pain was worth it.

The small hut is perched in a basin beneath the rugged south face of Mt Hopeless and the blocky north face of Mt Cupola. With panoramic views of the mountains and down the Travers Valley, it's a place that makes you feel at peace with the world.

As the day cooled we moved inside and I sifted through the extensive collection of literature on crossing Gunsight Pass.

Chris was equally excited to find a discarded knee brace as an injury suffered on a previous trip to Fiordland had flared up. He was confident it wouldn't be a problem, but I silently cursed tough old farmers who don't get injuries checked out. Admittedly I have little ground for complaint: my wife could testify to my inheritance of the same stubborn gene.

The next morning we made quick progress to the distinctive U-shaped pass sandwiched between Mts Cupola and Travers. Gunsight Pass sees far fewer visitors than the more southerly Travers Saddle, which made it an attractive target for our trip.

We made a fast descent of fine scree and crossed easy tussock flats below the west face of Mt Travers, pausing only to trade stares with an inquisitive deer. After a long stand off, the deer finally fled in our intended direction of travel.

Our progress was not as swift and soon we were brought to a standstill by a series of deep gouges where rock had sloughed off the side of the mountain.

Scouting past the first gash revealed more broken land blocking our route to a meeting with the Travers-Sabine Track.

Our best option was to carefully descend the rock slide. Smashed tree trunks and loose rock gave way to a steep mountain stream





Descending from the headwaters of Hopeless Creek

then gentle beech forest. We met the track just above the bridge over the spectacular chasm of the Sabine River East Branch.

Back on a marked track, we sped to the Sabine Forks and turned for Blue Lake.

Heading south we encountered evidence of the avalanches that in winter tear down from the steep ranges above the valley. The massive snow movements had left their mark right to the river's edge with the track re-routed in places and we picked through areas of broken bush and scattered rock.

A short climb finally led us to the welcome sight of Blue Lake Hut, where a long row of boots indicated plenty of company.

Before bunking down we visited Blue Lake, which has some of the clearest water in the world. From up close it didn't appear spectacular. It wasn't until the next morning, when we viewed it from above that its full beauty was revealed – gleaming a brilliant blue like a thin sapphire jutting out of the earth.

That evening we enjoyed the multi-national company which included trampers from England, Wales, Czech Republic, Israel and America – but no other Kiwis. The hut book suggested this is common, with most visitors having made the journey from overseas – many attracted by Te Araroa.

Planning to reach the Matakītaki Valley, we left the hut early, climbed above Blue Lake and past Lake Constance with Franklin

Ridge reflected in its still water. After cutting through bluffs at the lake's head, we followed the open river; a spectacular spot ringed by peaks crowned with snow.

The mid-morning sun and loose scree made the 500m climb to Waiau Pass a challenge and it was a relief to reach the 1870m saddle. With expansive views over Marlborough, Nelson and Canterbury, Waiau Pass is an ideal place to contemplate trails already walked and the journey to come.

Our next destination – Lake Thompson – could be seen nestled in the mountains to the south-west.

With no route to the lake, we first picked our way through the snow and rock below Waiau Pass before turning up-river and climbing tussock slopes to the lake.

For many, Lake Thompson provides an overnight camping spot. It's easy to see the appeal of lounging by the small lake below high peaks, the long route from Waiau Pass playing out directly in front.

For us there was time only for a quick snack before making for Thompson Pass where we stared across the head of the D'Urville River to D'Urville Pass.

Trusting others' experience, we climbed onto an unlikely jumble of rock. Our faith was quickly rewarded as we saw a cairn, the first of a ragged trail that picked its way through a series of cliffs to emerge on open slabs.

With the afternoon drifting away, we made our way around the head of the valley and on to a wide, sparsely grassed ledge which ran out short of the pass. We noticed an apparently easy line leading up to a small notch in the ridge and with time against us decided to take the direct approach rather than sidle beneath bluffs for another scree climb to reach the pass.

I surged up with a sense of trepidation. The ridge was ragged rock and the far side could bring anything from scree, slabs or sheer cliffs.

Peering over the crest, it was with relief I saw a gully – rocky and steep, but passable.

We were in true mountain goat country so encountering the chamois came as no great surprise. When it finally bounded away, it was with depressing ease. In contrast, we continued our slow downward shuffle, eventually emerging at the Matakītaki River East Branch.

There was little time to celebrate exiting the mountains as we still hoped to make East Matakītaki Hut before nightfall. It was already after 6pm.

Travel down-valley looked easy, but we were soon battling waist high tussock mounds. Reaching the bush edge provided little relief: clear paths were rare and we were often left thrashing through clinging branches and undergrowth.

Eventually we found easy going in the



riverbed, but light was fading and my GPS showed we were still an hour from the hut.

We decided to avoid an uncertain walk in darkness and used the last light to find a suitable campsite where we could build a makeshift shelter. A fallen tree trunk provided a solid wall and we improvised a roof using two emergency blankets. Rocks filled the remaining walls and dry grass made for comfortable bedding.

It was a special night lying beside the roaring fire, staring up at a clear dark sky where uncountable stars mingled with sparks from the flames.

We departed early to make up lost time and were soon surprised to hear voices.

At a river crossing we met a group of 19 from Nelson College. The students were doing the reverse of our trip and had camped on large river flats just a few hundred metres from us.

We shared route notes and wished them well, then forged ahead, soon picking up easy tracks beside the river.

We passed East Matakita Hut, looking lonely but accommodating in a grassy clearing, and continued to Bobs Hut. For most of the morning we had been blessed with easy walking on marked tracks, but past Bobs Hut we entered thick swatches of bush and a steep-sided gorge in the Matakita River West Branch.

Emerging above the gorge, travel slowed but was not difficult. The advice we had received was to not follow the river too far up-valley, where impenetrable bluffs awaited, but to climb to its true right. What



Approaching Sunset Saddle with Lake Angelus in the background



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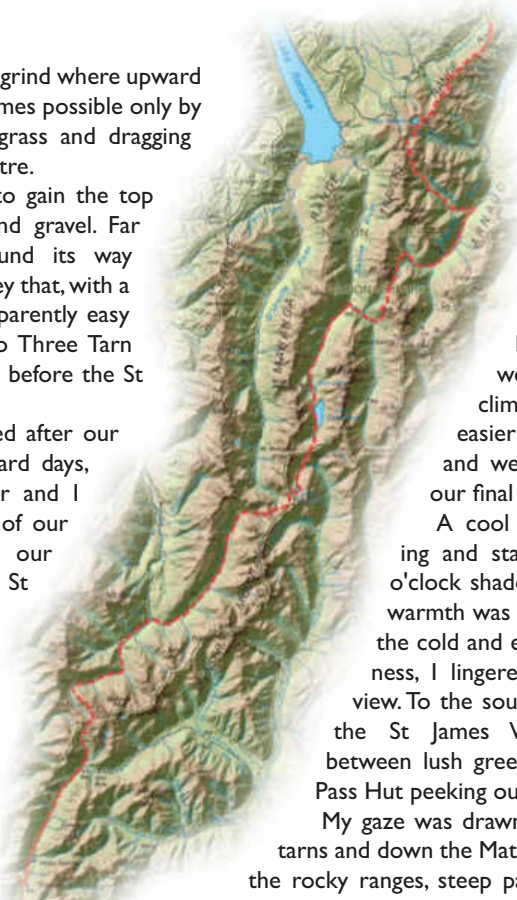
Lake Constance and the upper Sabine Valley from below Waiau Pass

followed was a vertical grind where upward movement was sometimes possible only by hauling on fistfuls of grass and dragging ourselves metre by metre.

It took two hours to gain the top of a ridge of grass and gravel. Far below, the river wound its way serenely through a valley that, with a gentle gradient and apparently easy walking, would lead to Three Tarn Pass – our final hurdle before the St James Walkway.

Hot, sweaty and tired after our long climb and two hard days, frustration boiled over and I questioned the sanity of our prolonged climb and our ability to reach the St James before dark. A snack break and close scrutiny of the map calmed me down and we traversed a mixture of easy grass slopes and rock slabs to the tarns.

Three Tarn Pass is not obvious from



below. Aligning the three bodies of water points to an unlikely looking gap between rock outcrops. The approach is steep and loose, but as we trudged wearily upward, the climb, for once, was easier than it looked and we quickly reached our final pass.

A cool wind was blowing and standing in the six o'clock shadows, the summer warmth was gone. But despite the cold and encroaching darkness, I lingered to savour the view. To the south and far below, the St James Walkway snaked between lush green bush with Ada Pass Hut peeking out of the trees.

My gaze was drawn north, over the tarns and down the Matakītaki. I imagined the rocky ranges, steep passes and rugged

valleys we had travelled.

Reluctantly, I turned my back on chamois country and started the descent, looking forward to the comforts of home. **W**



#### **WILD FILE**

**Access** Mt Robert car park at the end of Mt Robert Rd, off SH63 near St Arnaud

**Grade** Difficult. Off-track travel and route finding ability is needed especially between Waiau Pass and Three Tarn Pass

**Time** 6-9 days

**Distance** 98.3km

**Total ascent** 7594m

**Accommodation** Hopeless Hut, 6 bunks; Cupola Hut, 8 bunks; Blue Lake Hut, 16 bunks; East Matakītaki Hut, 6 bunks; Ada Pass Hut, 14 bunks; Cannibal Gorge Hut, 20 bunks

**Map** BR24, BS23, BS24, BT23, BT24



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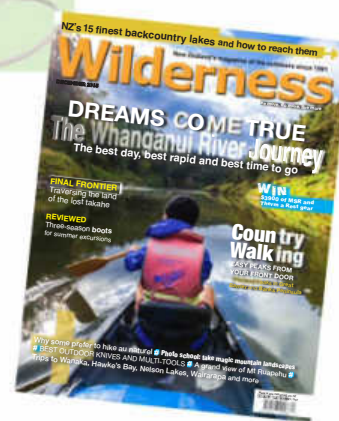
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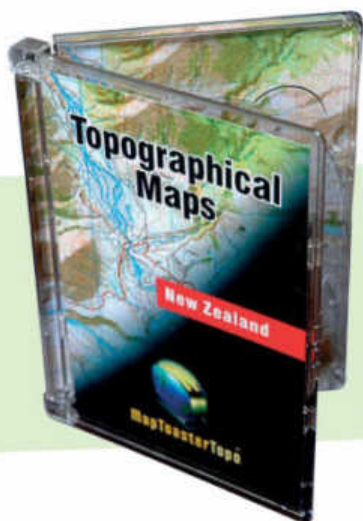
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WILD  
RIVER

# A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

A trip down the Whanganui River is cultural, historic, relaxing and fun. **Matthew Pike** discovers every journey has a different story to tell

Hutchwilco  
Whanganui River  
Adventures





The river now had a more sinister edge. Gone was the clear tranquillity. Before us was a swirling, coffee-coloured debris-strewn torrent, flowing twice as fast, and a good metre higher, than the day before.

None of us had any experience of paddling high-flow rivers and we were all intimidated, especially when a dead and very bloated goat floated past. We considered waiting for the water level to drop, but the impromptu measuring stick placed at the water's edge an hour earlier indicated it was still rising.

We all agreed – leave now and stick together. There'd be safety in numbers. So eight boats and 14 nervous paddlers lined up to face the music.

One of the great joys of any multiday trip is battling whatever elements are thrown your way. But compared to tramping – my usual outdoor medium – travelling on water magnifies the elements. A good dump of rain can turn a placid stretch of water into a murky, goat-strewn whirlpool. Conversely, it can also make a feared rapid disappear altogether. A headwind can make an easy saunter a gruelling day of hard work.

Your whole environment can be transformed by a change in the weather that on land could be a minor inconvenience. There's a good reason why the 'journey' element of this particular trip is emphasised to such an extent. The unsettled climate, the extensive history, the characters you meet along the way, ensure every trip has its own unique story to tell.

All this was far from my mind when encountering my safety briefing on the opening morning of our Whanganui Journey. Here I was, staring at a whiteboard with what looked like a snake meandering from top to bottom. I was trying to find a part of my brain that could possibly retain information about avoiding a tree stump I'd encounter in two days' time. Clearly recognising the beleaguered expression on my face, Jono – our instructor – decided to simplify things.

"If you're approaching a rapid and in any doubt," he said, "head to the right on day one, and to the left on days two, three and four."

Even my limited brain capacity could remember that, I thought.

"Except for the very last rapid," continued Jono. "Damn," I exclaimed. "What do we do then?"

"On that rapid you aim for the right."

Apparently we'd know it was the last rapid because the sign saying '500m to Pipiriki' precedes it. This meant, in all likelihood, if you did fall in, you'd have an audience, many armed with cameras.

"On a hot day, falling in is great fun," Jono added cheerily, as we all glanced outside to the impending drizzle that was to dominate our first day on the river.





Preparing for take-off into a high river from John Coull Hut

The Whanganui is normally paddled in three days from a miniscule settlement called Whakahoro. But there's also a four-day option starting from Ohinepane campsite and a five-day option starting at Taumarunui. My girlfriend Lauren and I had decided to take the four-day option on advice of Jono – an instructor from Taumarunui Canoe Hire. My greater experience on the water (sea kayaking only) meant I was to sit in the back of the Canadian canoe and was technically 'in charge' – not a situation Lauren would normally accept, but one she was prepared to put up with so long as I guided us safely through any angry-looking water. I quickly learnt being in charge actually meant I'd cop all the flack if we tipped. The pressure was on.

Once making sure we looked comfortable in the water, Jono waved us off and promised to see us in four days time with a box of muffins.

Under his careful gaze from the riverbank, we immediately attempted the first rapid. We headed right (as advised), bounced a lot, got splashed, and then cheered as we sauntered past our first eddy; a harmless looking feature responsible for more boat tipping than the rapid itself.

Eddies appear to defy physics by heading upstream. Often situated either side of the rapid, if you veer off course during your descent you can find yourself experiencing a cold bath in such quick time you barely have time to gasp.

But we were through our first rapid and the journey had started. Beginning at Ohinepane was a fine introduction; plenty

of rapids to get us into the swing of things, great rock formations either side of the river, and a real sense of entering somewhere special.

The rain never entirely let up, but our drenching was only a problem when we stopped for a break and began to shiver. A quick cup of tea and we were back on the water enjoying the mysterious sight of mist draped over faded hilltops.

For much of the day we were surrounded by farmland and were aware of back roads following the path of the river, but we rarely saw or heard a vehicle. Towards the end of the day, the forest became thicker and we felt further removed from civilisation. Just before reaching Whakahoro, our home for the evening, we travelled through our first proper gorge, with picture postcard views.

For us, reaching Whakahoro meant a long trudge from where we left the canoe to the bunkroom (350m is a long way when you're lugging barrels of gear and food). But to river guide Jamie Anderson, this area is historically fascinating. Anderson, of Unique Whanganui River Experience, has been guiding on the river for 33 years and would have led Lauren and I had he not been recovering from a shoulder operation.

Instead, he took me through some of the river's vast history prior to my trip, explaining how Makakote Pa, close to Whakahoro, was, in the early 1800s, the scene of a great siege between the down-river and the upriver Maori. It continued for so long that the upriver Maori (the tribe under siege led by Topine Te Mamaku) were running out of food. In desperation, they presented their children

to the aggressors, who then took pity and left.

Earlier in the day, we'd enjoyed paddling to a small waterfall in the Ohura River; then past an open-top hill with two flagpoles standing prominent. "Back in the 1860s, the last of the serious Maori to Maori conflicts took place over the ownership of local flour mills," explained Anderson. "A lot of people were killed in these conflicts and the poles were placed in memory of these battles."

You can't overestimate the river's importance to the Maori of this region. Repeatedly, we would see the message 'I am the river, the river is me'. One legend has it that the water flowing down the river heals the wound created by Mt Taranaki, who tore a path west after losing a fierce battle with Mt Tongariro over the beautiful Mt Pihanga.

Whakahoro bunkhouse was warm and dry – everything we needed after the first day. The setting was beautiful with mist still rolling through the hilltops the following morning.

We joined two German kayakers, Maurice and Franzi, who were paddling in separate boats. Franzi had already fallen in – a great relief to us, as we'd been told one in three boats tip on the river, meaning statistically we were now safe.

Despite no great rainfall overnight, the river had risen almost a metre and we knew paddling would be significantly quicker than the day before. We soon entered the first of several gorges – beautiful and tranquil, with the faster water drifting us down-valley at a healthy rate. The rain had cleared, so we were no longer shivering uncontrollably on our occasional brew-stops.

Our big fear for the day – as warned by



Anderson, Jono and our map – was making sure we avoided the tree stump to the right of the rapid immediately after Mangapapa campsite. “It’s like the tree stump’s magnetic,” Anderson had warned. “People tend to make a decision at the last minute, but the stump draws you towards it. I’ve seen kayaks wrapped around that and you normally need a jet boat to get them off. There’s plenty of room on the left if you make the decision fairly early.”

As soon as we saw Mangapapa campsite our anxiety grew and we hugged the left bank. The outcome was a laughable anticlimax, as a fairly tame rapid saw us bobbing harmlessly past the stump, wondering ‘is that it?’

The rest of the day was straightforward, as we headed deep into the forest. Several short, sharp rapids kept our buttocks clenched. One included Tarepokiore, also known as the whirlpool rapid. Dredging has tamed this rapid, but in years past it was notorious. Rapids normally disappear in high flow, but for some reason this one increased in size to the point where steamboats were sometimes turned right around. “It must have given the passengers a fright,” laughed Anderson.

These steamboats used to carry tourists from Wanganui to Taumarunui before they continued their journey to Central Plateau,

Lake Taupo and Rotorua. Prior to the completion of the railway, the river was one of the tourist attractions. In 1906, 12,000 tourists travelled the river – compared to 7000 canoeists each year these days. The numbers dropped to the point where the river was almost forgotten about in the 1950s and 60s. “A friend of mine kayaked down in the 60s and had to hack his way to the Bridge to Nowhere,” said Anderson.

Since then, numbers have started to climb, but this increase has only ever been gradual. And unlike other New Zealand Great Walks, the Whanganui Journey seems more popular with locals than tourists. Over the Christmas holidays, the huts and campsites are packed, whereas in February and March there’s normally space which, combined with long days and warm weather, makes this an excellent time of year to go.

As we approached John Coull Hut we could see slip after slip on both sides of the river. These are scars from the colossal flooding experienced over the winter. The water level rose 9m and there’s an obvious line showing where the water swept away the vegetation. The storms turned dry forest bed into waterfalls and damaged many of the campsites and huts.

John Coull is a case in point. A slip between hut and campsite has swept away the trees to create an ugly tangle of branches and mud. It consumed the path and it’s a miracle the hut was unharmed – the only casualty being the toilets, which had just been replaced prior to our arrival.

At the hut, our group of four became 14 as we were joined by those who began their trip at Whakahoro. I spent the evening trying to explain the value of a good leave shot in cricket to a group of bemused Europeans. I must have been particularly boring because everyone was in bed by 9pm. No sooner had our heads hit the pillows than a downpour began which continued relentlessly until 6am the following morning when, as if someone turned the tap off, it stopped and we didn’t see another drop for the rest of the trip.

But it was clear from first light the river would be a different animal to the day before. There were a few nerves, as people figured out what to do. We all queued up and, one by one, were pushed out by the hut rangers into the debris-

A kayaker goes for a shower south of Whakahoro



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We cruised downstream at a close to alarming rate. It was great fun and a good workout, as what would have been rapids the day before had now become a series of whirlpools. Staying on course was a struggle, particularly on one corner where those in front of us were heading in all sorts of directions and mostly facing the wrong way. After a few moments of wondering what on earth they were doing, we found ourselves caught in the swirling mess of currents, being flung to the right, then the left, before being spat into an eddy and moving upstream. As a group, from above, we must have looked like drunks, veering back and forth with no sense of control or direction. With a good deal of hard paddling and a little luck we forced our way through and continued south.

Before any of us expected to, we saw the sign to the Bridge to Nowhere. But, as we were on the wrong side of the river, the first six boats, including our own, missed it. We could only watch helplessly as we drifted away, wishing the final two boats luck in their desperate scramble to get their canoes to shore.

Missing out on walking the 45 minute trail to the bridge meant missing out on a fascinating part of the river's history, where First World War servicemen and their families tried to farm this inhospitable area. "Imagine creating a farm from a jungle," said Anderson. He described how they would have needed to clear the bush, burn it away in summer, seed the grass in autumn before finding stock to graze there. "It was hard work but they probably thought it was marvellous," he added. "At least no-one was shooting at you, as they would have been in the war."

The disappointment of missing out on this trip was countered by the glorious ease of the remainder of the day – hardly a whirlpool in sight – and by arriving at Tieke Kainga Hut, campsite and marae early in the afternoon in perfect sunshine. The marae itself is situated right next to the hut with an enormous pou whenua, telling the story of the iwi, who greet paddlers to this day.

The site was presumed to be owned by the crown until the early 1990s when local Maori proved they had land rights at Tieke Kainga. This has led to dual-management of the hut and often a powhiri to welcome guests. This wasn't the case for us, but our host Leianna and her two daughters greeted us warmly.

Of no small concern to us was that the All Blacks were due to play their World Cup semi final against South Africa at 4am the following morning. We'd been previously advised to try and make contact with Joe, who runs the Bridge to Nowhere accommodation over the river. So the evening prior to the game we called across. After rescuing some kayakers who had fallen out of their boats upstream, he came over to see us and, for a small fee, agreed to pick us up at 3.50am.



A sunny afternoon at Tieke Kainga marae

It was a successful morning with the All Blacks downing South Africa (20-18, in case you'd forgotten) followed by a breakfast of homemade potato bread with jam and whipped cream prepared by Leianna.

Back on the river, the first hour was the most beautiful of the whole trip, with the deepest, narrowest and most serene gorges. I've heard when the water's low, and you're against the wind, this section can be a struggle, as there isn't much current to help you along. But we cruised through on the high flow.

It was truly relaxing, until we reached Ngaporo. Here, a long S-bend rapid drags you out to the left. I'd quickly learnt that the best way to tackle rapids when the water's high is to just head straight down the middle. But one pair we were canoeing with chose to head left, where the current changed direction when ricocheting off the wall. It swept the front of their boat away and they took a swim.

In 1940, this rapid was the scene of a far more serious calamity. An overloaded riverboat carrying 214 cattle downriver began to tip. The cattle moved to one side of the boat causing it to capsize, killing three people and many more animals.

For our paddling companions, the only casualty was a Go-Pro. Once they'd emptied the water from their vessel they were back on the river and ready to tackle the final set of rapids before Pipiriki.

As the water was still high, they provided little trouble. Even the rapid ominously known as the '50-50' was relatively benign. Autapu – the final rapid, also notorious – spat us out to the Pipiriki boat ramp, where our early arrival meant we waited a short while for the promised muffins to arrive.

## Jamie's favourites

Jamie Anderson, guide for Unique Whanganui River Experience, shares his pick of the great river.


**The best rapid** Autapu (the final rapid); it's challenging, with several big pressure waves which will either fill the canoe or tip it over! Great fun, especially on a hot sunny day

**The best camping spot** Mangawaiiti; a good climb but the camper is rewarded with a beautiful flat area, plenty of shade, or sun.

**The most beautiful hour on the river** The early morning with the river mist can be stunningly beautiful. Often quite cool, at 5.30am you can enjoy a beautiful dawn chorus

**The best paddling side trip** Mangaio Stream can be negotiated for around 400m. It's very narrow with bush reaching across from each side, far above the paddler

**The best time to go** Mid-February; school is back, the river has quietened down a bit and the weather is usually stable and hot

Most slept on the journey back to Taumarunui, missing an outstanding view of the Central Plateau, the summits caked in snow. For every one of us, the trip had given us laughs, excitement, friendship, the odd dose of fear, a sense of achievement, and a far greater appreciation for how the mood of a big river can change day-to-day. It had, in more ways than one, been a journey we'll rave about for years to come. 





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## ST BATHANS HIDEAWAY

### Hidden Lake, Oteake Conservation Park

Although Oteake Conservation Park is characterised by very high, bleak slopes and large and dry alpine basins, there are some remarkable features here, including numerous alpine lakes. The largest of these is also the most accessible; Hidden Lake (not named on maps) at 1553m on the northern end of the St Bathans Range. This deep, dark lake is ringed with bluffs on its northern edge and littered with large striking boulders. Campsites are few and far between, but the setting is beautiful and offers great photography.

The St Bathans Range is easily climbed and can be traversed southwards for many kilometres.

- Pat Barrett

**ACCESS** Broken Hut Road, south of Omarama to DOC boundary

**GRADE** Moderate

**TIME** 5hr

Ringed with bluffs, Hidden Lake is an alpine gem in Oteake Conservation Park



## CRATERED LAKES

**Tama lakes, Tongariro National Park**

In the stark desert-like environment of Tongariro National Park, bodies of water are always a welcome interruption to the stretches of scoria and rock. Like most lakes in the park, Upper and Lower Tama lakes fill ancient explosion craters. This pair is situated on a broad and gentle saddle stretching between Mt Ngauruhoe to the north and Mt Ruapehu to the south.

Accessed via a short detour from the Ton-

gariro Northern Circuit, the track provides a viewpoint of Lower Tama before climbing 200m to a spectacular overlook that provides views of both Upper and Lower lakes, and panoramic views of Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe.

Few people explore these lakes beyond the trail itself and a detour to reach their shores is a worthwhile and peaceful escape if the track itself is busy.

The lakes are a popular day walk from

Whakapapa Village, but are also part of the Tongariro Northern Circuit. It's also possible to camp above the lakes – though ensure you're 500m from any tracks. Outside of winter you'll need to carry water.

- Mark Watson

**ACCESS** Whakapapa Village, Tongariro National Park

**GRADE** Easy

**TIME** 5-6hr return



Lake Turner surrounded by Central Darrans peaks

## COOL OFF

**Hellfire Tarn, Leatham Conservation Area**

Hellfire Tarn isn't known to many. It's not named on any topographic map, but without doubt, it's one of the best swimming tarns and most idyllic camping spots you'll find.

Hellfire Tarn lies at the head of Hellfire Stream, a minor tributary of the Wairau River, in Marlborough's Leatham Conservation Area. It's set in a cirque beneath several unnamed peaks, all around 1900m. Reaching the tarn is not unduly difficult, but will require good fording skills and some navigation ability.

In recent years, members of Nelson Tramping Club have maintained an informal track up the lower reaches of Hellfire Stream. First, however, you must ford the substantial Wairau River – which may be impossible when in anything but low flow. Once in the Hellfire Valley, pick up the marked track on the true right. It stays mostly on this side, but a huge windfall has partially wiped out a section of track for several hundred metres, which will require some scrambling, bush-bashing, sweat and probably swearing.

The track then negotiates a way through the gorge. Above, the valley opens out and the gradient eases, with the tramping becoming easier. The track fords the stream often, sometimes passing through delightful flats. As the peaks begin to reveal themselves, one last climb through beech forest leads to the valley head.

This is grand country, with rocky peaks, large scree slides and dense tussock grasslands. As yet, the tarn remains out of sight,

## PRIZED DESTINATION

**Lake Turner, Fiordland National Park**

Remote, challenging to reach, and in an extraordinary location, Lake Turner is a prized place to visit.

Situated at the head of Cleft Creek, this body of water is cradled by the steep peaks of Te Wera, Karetai and Patuki; the névé that clings to their slopes is one of the lake's sources. Lake Turner's outlet provides no gentle escape for the water that courses from it, for it soon passes over a 265m fall to the isolated valley below.

It is said sometimes of travel that the 'journey is the destination' and this will be the case for any visit to this lake. It's a location visited on the classic Central Darrans Traverse route between Tutoko Valley and Moraine Creek, and it can also be utilised as a climbing base for the surrounding peaks. The nearest helicopter landing site is at

Turners Bivouac, several hours' travel away. Reached by any route, basic glacier travel and rock climbing skill and a head for heights will be required on this alpine adventure. A boulder-dotted grassy flat near the lake outlet provides a beautiful camping spot and exploration base.

I visited this dramatic spot during a climbing trip, based out of a rock bivouac higher above the lake on the north-west face of Karetai Peak. We flew to Turners Bivouac, then traversed Tarewai to reach the lake, an easy climb and scramble that required just one belayed pitch.

- MW

**ACCESS** Milford Road, Cleddau Valley; or Turners Bivouac

**GRADE** Difficult

**TIME** 3-5 days



## LAKESIDE HUT

### Lake Waikareiti, Te Urewera

Lake Waikareiti is a more intimate body of water than its larger neighbour, Waikaremoana. The smaller lake makes a fine destination either as a half-day trip to its southern shore, or as an overnight tramp to Sandy Bay Hut. The intricate shoreline, surrounded by forest, has many bays. The lake also boasts several small islands, the largest of which, Rahui, sports its own tiny lake.

From near the Aniwhaniwa Visitor Centre, a well-graded path climbs steadily to reach the shelter overlooking the southern lakeshore. Beyond, the track sidles through forest to the west, swinging north-east to finally reach Sandy Bay. The 18-bunk Sandy Bay Hut must be booked in advance.

For a worthwhile alternative return route, take the Ruapani Track, which traverses some magnificent forest, and past several sizable wetlands and small lakes.

- Shaun Barnett

**ACCESS** Aniwhaniwa Visitor Centre

**GRADE** Easy

**TIME** 4hr to Sandy Bay Hut; 6-8hr return via Ruapani Track



Lake Waikareiti



Hellfire Tarn is a perfect place to cool off

and to avoid bluffs it's best to approach via a series of terraces on the true right. Once there, you're in paradise. During summer, warmed by the long days, the tarn takes on the temperature of a refreshingly tepid bath, and the swimming is divine. There are ample places to pitch the tent, peaks to scramble up, and tussock to laze among.

A longer round trip can be made by climbing over a pass into the Misery (where there are more sizable tarns) and beyond into the Branch and Lees valleys. A smattering of good huts and tracks makes this an excellent tramp – often ignored compared to those of nearby Nelson Lakes National Park.

- SB

**ACCESS** Rainbow Road, Marlborough.

Rainbow Station charges an access fee of \$20 per vehicle

**GRADE** Moderate

**TIME** 2-3 days return, 5 days for a round trip through neighbouring valleys.

## WORLD'S PUREST LAKE

### Blue Lake, Nelson Lakes National Park

A sacred and special site, Blue Lake is known to Ngati Apa iwi as Rotomairewhenua (the land of peaceful waters). Small of stature but big in importance, this lake is internationally recognised as having the clearest water of any measured lake in the world. For those who have made the world-class tramping trip from St Arnaud, arrival will come as a reward after at least two days of walking. It's worth building an extra day into your trip for relaxing or exploring here.

The comfortable Blue Lake Hut is conveniently sited just a short distance from the lake, but there is also excel-

lent camping among the tussock near the lake's edge. A further walk up-valley of 45-60min leads to Lake Constance – Blue Lake's source. This much larger lake was formed when a massive landslide dammed the Sabine River and it's through this material that Blue Lake's water is filtered, creating a sparkling gem surrounded by steep craggy peaks and patches of mountain beech.

- MW

**ACCESS** from Lakes Rotoroa or

Rotoiti via the Travers Sabine Circuit

**GRADE** Moderate

**TIME** 4-6 days



Evening at Blue Lake







## HIGH REWARDS

### Adelaide Tarn, Kahurangi National Park

Kahurangi translates to 'blue skies', and you will certainly need a fair weather window if you have any hope of attaining this spectacular setting.

The Douglas Range borders the vast Tasman Wilderness Area, first penetrated by James Mackay in 1856 on his first survey up the Aorere River. Adelaide Tarn is suspended in lofty seclusion and immortalised in tramping journals as a type of holy grail.

The easiest way there – avoiding the Dragons Teeth, the exposed Yuletide and the demanding 'low route' – is along the eroded spine of the Douglas Range from Boulder Lake, taking most parties two days, and even this requires a determined effort.

Adelaide Tarn, cradled into an alpine amphitheatre, is surrounded by a series of gnarly peaks with names like Trident and Needle. Stumble down a tussock spur; trot along the lake-shore; squeeze into the hut – not much more than a utilitarian garden shed with four anorexic bunks and a small cooking bench. The sole window looks north to Mt Clark, reflected in the lake. There are few flat camping spots around this boggy expanse, and in summer the tiny hut could get crowded.

Speargrass and celmisia complement a gorgeous spread of alpine flowers around the tarn – one of the most memorable spots in the mountains.

*- Raymond Salisbury*

**ACCESS** James Road Right Branch, near Bainham, provides access to the track to Boulder Lake

**GRADE** Difficult

**TIME** Two full days to the lake

Adelaide Tarn with the Dragons Teeth beyond

MARK WATSON

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## ROOM WITH A VIEW

**Maungahuka Tarn, Tararua Forest Park**

Maungahuka is arguably the North Island's most outstanding location for a mountain tarn. It's situated in a shallow basin near the peak of Maungahuka, with the 10-bunk Maungahuka Hut right beside it. It's a place of sublime beauty, with views as far as Mt Taranaki, and surrounded by the great sprawling complexity of the Tararua Ranges.

Several routes lead to the tarn, none of them particularly easy, and all exposed. Most trampers approach from the south, after first climbing to Bridge Peak on the Southern Crossing Track, then heading north across the main range route. This way does require negotiating the steep terrain around the Tararua Peaks, and the

infamous ladder, which can be hair-raising in bad weather. Another approach from Otaki Forks uses the track linking Waitewaewae and Anderson Memorial huts, which continues over Aokaparangi and Simpson to reach Maungahuka from the north. Trampers often combine these two routes to make a rewarding 4-5 day round trip.

A third alternative approaches from the east, beginning with a tramp into Totara Flats, Cone Ridge and Neil Forks Hut, followed by a climb up Meat Safe Spur over Concertina Knob to Maungahuka. This route has excellent views of the Tararua Peaks.

No matter which way you reach Maungahuka, you'll have earned the reward of overlooking that magnificent tarn.

- SB

**ACCESS** Otaki Gorge Road, Otaki Forks

**GRADE** Medium-hard, exposed tops

**TIME** Allow 3-4 days for a return trip



Lake Colenso is nestled in a hollow above Mangatera River

JONATHAN ASTIN

## LONELY LAKE

**Lake Colenso, Ruahine Forest Park**

The tops of the Ruahine Ranges boast plenty of small tarns, but this lake is the only sizable body of water in the park. Set beneath limestone bluffs, it's surrounded by a podocarp forest. Known by Maori as Kokopunui, the lake was once a productive site for hunting eels, fish and birds.

The most direct of several routes to the lake begins from the west, via a poled track across the edge of Mokai Station to Iron

Bark Hut. Once across the Maropea River, take the track that climbs over a bush ridge above the Mangatera River. Lake Colenso is nestled in a curious hollow on the nearby plateau. Colenso Hut (10-bunks) lies about 10 minutes beyond the lake.

- SB

**ACCESS** Mokai Road, Rangitikei

**GRADE** Moderate

**TIME** 3-4 days return

SHAUN BARNETT/BLACK ROBIN PHOTOGRAPHY





## SCRAMBLE AND RAMBLE

### Paratitahi Tarns, Nelson Lakes National Park

These large attractive tarns lie in a glacial basin at the head of the Arnst River at an altitude of 1650m. They are both remote and beautiful and require some planning, with good weather to reach, and therefore a reasonable challenge for a weekend camp-out.

The best approach is along the St Arnaud Range, as this adds a measure of additional challenge and the opportunity to explore some new country en-route. The terrain is moderate, though it may require the use of ice axe and crampons when snow lies on the ground. At other times of the year it is an easy scramble with any obstacles being readily passed by dropping into the many basins and benches on the eastern flanks.

South of Mt McCrae, 1878m, a small pass leads to a steep, narrow scree slope dropping into the head of the tarn basin which is very large and has numerous tarns and campsites, which can be chosen depending on your preference and the weather.

The largest tarn has an excellent campsite at its northern edge and is ideal for a quick and chilly swim.

There are other basins to visit to the south,



PAT BARRETT

Dropping off St Arnaud Range to Paratitahi Tarns

below Peanter Peak, 1880m, and to the east and south along the St Arnaud Range, for those with good scrambling skills. Or just lay back and take in this special location with a brew and a good book.

The best route out is to climb to the ridge west of the tarns at Pt 1849m, and descend

carefully into the large scree chute which drops to the Travers Valley.

- PB

**ACCESS** From Lake Rotoiti, take St Arnaud Range Track, then head south

**GRADE** Moderate

**TIME** Two days

## ALPINE MAGIC

### Lake Nerine, Mt Aspiring National Park

Situated at the northern end of the Humboldt Mountains, between the Rockburn and Hidden Falls Creek, Lake Nerine is high in the alpine zone.

At almost 1500m, it is surrounded by steep and rugged bare rock mountains and permanent snow fields. The shores around the lake itself are relatively verdant during the summer months, with quite an array of alpine flowers to temper the craggy desolation.

This is a magical place to spend a day or two, scrambling over the surrounding rocky peaks, climbing Nereus Peak or photographing the mountain buttercups that decorate the shoreline.

- Nick Groves

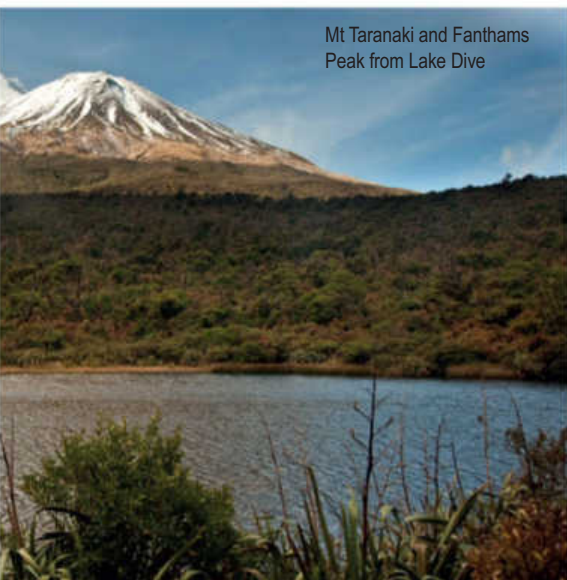
**ACCESS** From Routeburn Shelter car park either head up the Routeburn to the North Branch or go via Sugarloaf Pass

**GRADE** Moderate-difficult

**TIME** Two days to lake



NICK GROVES



Mt Taranaki and Fanthams Peak from Lake Dive

## MOUNTAIN VIEWS

### Lake Dive, Egmont National Park, Taranaki

Lake Dive occupies a depression behind two unusual volcanic mounds known as The Beehives. The nearby 16-bunk hut offers excellent views across the lake towards Mt Taranaki's southern slopes. Two tracks – upper and lower – lead to Lake Dive, providing an opportunity for a weekend round-trip. The upper track climbs towards Fanthams Peak, before diverting across moderate tussock slopes

and down a forest track to Lake Dive. The lower track sidles through goblin forest to reach the hut.

- SB

**ACCESS** Dawson Falls Visitor Centre

**GRADE** Easy-moderate. Upper track can be exposed and snow-covered

**TIME** Upper track, 5-6hr; Lower track, 3-4hr





Lake Lockett is in an alpine cirque

## THE TINY, THE LARGE AND THE PESKY

### Lake Lockett, Kahurangi National Park

In late 1858, James Mackay set out from Takaka, then bush-bashed along the Lockett Range, which he named after his companion, Captain Lockett. The pair camped by this remote alpine lake for several nights in their epic search for a road link south. The 28-year-old surveyor named most of the seven Diamond Lakes, and made two ascents of Iron Hill.

Trampers with reasonable navigational capabilities can reach Mackay's idyllic campsite beside Lake Lockett within five hours. There's a perfect site for a couple of small tents just a stone's throw from the lake outlet. A decent fireplace, tomahawk, billy and toilet spade have been left behind by regular patrons. The lake itself is deep enough for swimming and provides pure drinking water.

This wild location is locked into an alpine cirque, so the only view is facing south, where Iron Hill towers over the valley. Climb this 1695m monolith as an alternative route back to Lake Sylvester, or scramble up scree onto Mt Lockett, 1621m. Watch out for tiny

rock wren who flit and frolic among alpine herb-fields, which include mountain daisy and vegetable sheep. You might also spot goats and hear the cry of a kea. You will definitely be harassed by pesky weka.

To reach this secret spot, climb the old hydro road from Cobb Dam to Sylvester Hut and traverse the hill to the north of Lake Sylvester. Look for a steep descent route down an open face into the outlet stream from Iron Lake and follow a marked bush track onto the north-east flanks of Iron Hill. Sidling the grassy slopes beneath Lake Lillie, follow cairns westward along the bush edge. Locate the rough trail through forest directly down to Diamond Lake.

A well-marked track begins beyond the outlet stream of Diamond Lake and leads to Lake Lockett.

- RS

**ACCESS** Park at Cobb Dam on Cobb Dam Road  
**GRADE** Moderate  
**TIME** 4-5hr



## WIDE OPEN SPACES

### Lake Minchin, Arthur's Pass National Park

Once a popular campsite, Lake Minchin has become a more remote destination due to the recent demise of Casey Hut, which was discovered in smouldering ruins last October. The Hallelujah Bivouac is also gone, and flood damage on the lower Poulter River has made this must-do classic a bit more difficult to access. Nevertheless, the three-day return trip to Lake Minchin is perfect for those who love solitude and big open spaces.

Beginning from Andrews Shelter, a high sidle accesses the easy tussock flats of Andrews Stream, and over the relatively low Casey Saddle (777m). Following the true right of Casey Stream to the former hut site puts you on the Poulter River – a wide, gravelly expanse where paradise ducks rule supreme.

It's straightforward travel along a retired vehicle track to the old NZFS eight-bunk Trust/Poulter Hut. Around a big bend in the river is Poulter Hut, occupying prime real estate. Built in 2003, this comfortable abode sports 10 bunks and is a great rainy weather hideaway. From here, it's just a hop-skip-and-jump to Lake Minchin.

For the adventurous, a tough, grunty ground trail leads to the upper valley headwaters. Here, Minchin Biv, a tiny dogbox, provides dubious shelter for the intrepid souls who cross over into the Taramakau watershed.

- RS

**ACCESS** From Andrews Shelter on Mt White Road  
**GRADE** Easy  
**TIME** 10-11hr





NICK GROVES

Tremendous view – McNulty's Tarns and Aoraki/Mt Cook

## BUTTERCUPS AND TUSSOCK

### McNulty's Tarns, Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park

A hike to the Red Tarns above Mt Cook village is a popular excursion for many visitors to the park.

The majority turn around after taking a few photos from this fine viewpoint, but not too far above lies a more extensive cluster of tarns, nestled in tussock basins on a broad shelf directly below Mt Sebastopol. A trail weaves up through subalpine scrub to an obvious rock pinnacle, which provides a perfect resting perch while gazing across to the tumbling ice falls of Mt Sefton on the Main Divide.

Skirt around the ridge and angle gently down to reach the tarns, which in springtime have quite an array of mountain buttercups growing among the lush tussock. Although unmarked on maps, they are locally known as McNulty's Tarns, after mountain guide Dave McNulty, now sadly long gone, who used to fly his paraglider from up here.

Relax by one of these tarns, soak up the view of the surrounding snowy peaks rising above the Hooker Valley, culminating in the classic pyramid of the South Face of Aoraki itself, and even take a dip, as they do warm up on summer days.

For the energetic, and suitably experienced, Mt Sebastopol can be climbed from here in a further hour or so, following a stony ground trail that zigzags through the tussock and rock to the 1580m summit.

- NG

**ACCESS** Red Tarns Track,  
Mt Cook Village  
**GRADE** Easy  
**TIME** 3-4hr return

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EXPLORATION

# NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

On a traverse of the Murchison Mountains, **Carl Walrond** discovers the story of a 1955 Canterbury Museum expedition in search of takahe and uranium







Reaching Robin Saddle Hut involves traversing narrow benches between small bluffs



Karl and I motored up South Fiord, passing Forward Peak. Steve, the water taxi operator, pointed out some bailout options: the valleys of the Gorge and Tutu burns which would take us down to the lakeshore. Our plan was to traverse the unnamed main range of the Murchison Mountains, from Mt Irene we would head south to Robin Saddle, on to Te Au Saddle, Macpherson Pass and finally to Fowler Pass before joining the Kepler Track at Hanging Valley Shelter. We'd then walk down to Brod Bay where Steve would be waiting.

Steve told us few people tried the traverse we intended. To pass through the western Murchison Mountains, a 'special takahe area', we had obtained an entry permit from DOC and the last group who had tried – some Americans – had real difficulty with bluffs and, strangely for Fiordland, finding water.

At the drop-off at the mouth of Esk Burn, he pointed us in the right direction up McKenzie Burn. Unfortunately, my eye picked up an orange marker further to the right and this well-cut track took us up a sidestream before we realised our error and backtracked to the main river. It was an elementary mistake from a couple of chumps who had been too long in the city.

We soon came to McKenzie Burn Hut,

its NZFS hut book dating back to the 1970s. We continued upriver, the track rather indistinct before it crossed the McKenzie Burn where some old footings provided the only evidence of a former swingbridge. Surprisingly, we met a party of four who were retracing a 1955 Canterbury Museum expedition. Ross Philipson and his sons from Wellington, and Cathy Lewsley from Te Anau. Ross, the son of botanist William Philipson, had only learnt that a creek was named for his father after his death. Ross's sons asked if they could visit the creek. A chopper had dropped them off at the head of the burn that carried their

"How many had sat on this rock drinking single malt accompanied by **FIRE-INTRIGUED KEA WHILE THE MOON SET OVER THE MUSEUM RANGE?"**

name and they had tried for Robin Saddle Hut, but the bluffs and poor visibility had seen them detour to Te Au Hut.

Shortly after our encounter, we took another side track and headed briefly for the upper McKenzie. The steep climb told us we were wrong. Double chumps. The many tracks (they also serve as trap lines) in these mountains fooled us. In remote areas you usually only expect one well-marked track – if that. From then on, we had compasses around our necks and repeatedly checked the topo map. Taking detours had the advantage that we were late passing a tarn and heard kiwi calling.

At Te Au Hut the next morning, rain set in. The hut had an interesting collection of pulp fiction from a different era. The blurb from the cover of the novel *Goddess of Love* read 'gay, beautiful beyond belief, she cut the card that spelt death'. A black weka was poking around.

We headed into the rain and at the first bridge, Karl slipped and dislocated his shoulder. He lay on it face down and it soon popped back in, fortunately no worse for wear but he was stepping a little more circumspectly. We passed lakes and mossy bogs. Wisely Falls drained the lake of the same name to our right. We had by this time learned not to get side tracked. After crossing the river, the track climbed steadily. The tops churned in cloud and rain.

A gully full of windfall preceded Esk Saddle, where we pitched the fly and got some coffee on, swapped wet jackets for dry, and ate. As we took down the fly the weather began to break. We climbed through copses of scrub and tussock, a brief pinch up a waterfall required care. *Moirs Guide* reckoned 2.5 hours from Esk Saddle south along the range to Robin Saddle Hut. That seemed optimistic in this country where distances are not the main determinant of travel times. I later read a quote from a member of the Canterbury Museum expedition published in the *New Zealand Geographer* in 1955: 'The traveller is constantly skirting bogs, banks and bluffs and climbing up and down irregularities of terrain, with many detours made for tangles of trees



Lake Te Au Hut was built in 1963 and is the best preserved NZFS hut in the Murchisons





View south from Esk Saddle towards Macpherson and Fowler passes in the Kepler Mountains

and bushes within the forest itself. Put simply it takes longer to traverse country in Fiordland.'

As clouds lifted, we searched for a way through the bluffs that created an amphitheatre around the lake below Robin Saddle. We clung onto tussock, descended a gut and then skirted a bench and a few small bluffs among scrub before arriving at Robin Saddle Hut; a square hut built in 1962. The last entry in the hut book was by a solo tramp who had spent 10 days here in January 2014 – two days of her choosing and the balance hunkered down in a nor'west storm.

Entries went back to 1985 with references to 'tark nests' and the 'Irene benches'. The latter were readily visible clearings off to the south-west where the Canterbury Museum Expedition had camped – also dubbed the 'far faraway fields'. Their base camp was sited on the only 'near flat and grassy area in the locality'. It proved to be wet and springy. In choosing a site sheltered from the exposed tops, yet clear of the bush and above sandfly level, they bagged a sphagnum moss bog.

From camp, the expedition planned to send out small groups in search of takahe, surveying, sampling and collecting. One group of four made it to Nancy Sound and did the only surveying of the entire trip. Even by Fiordland standards, they were unlucky as they got two fine days in three weeks.

The two geologists, Collins and Coombs,

who lectured me some 40 years later at Otago, had Geiger counters and collected specimens. R.H. Wheeler, who wrote an account of the trip, noted 'small increases in the count, indicating some possibility of radioactive ores in the area'. No deposits were found and Wheeler later wrote: 'Whether a uranium find would be a worthwhile economic proposition is problematical, so inaccessible is the country.' And at a locale referred to as Garnet Tarn, not seen on any map today but probably one of the tarns around Te Au Saddle, they found garnets – gemstones – in abundance 'as large as walnuts'. Other features named such as Coronation Peak survived, but disappointingly others like Lake Shangri-La (the tarn immediately to the peak's west) did not.

At the Garnet Tarn camp, seven waterfalls were counted but an hour later there were 25, 'their roar continued for a day and a night, their accompaniment the drumming of the tent and the curses of the sodden cooks endeavouring to maintain a fire on the saturated ground which was covered by running water ankle-deep.'

Flat peaty terrain was soft to lie on but 'it proved uncomfortably cold when a very heavy shower gave rise to a four-inch deep surface flow of water'. Almost all camps were on this sort of ground. Most men had air mattresses sleeping above the surface flood but those less fortunate 'lay in water as the beech twig flooring of the tent became submerged, or drifted away'.

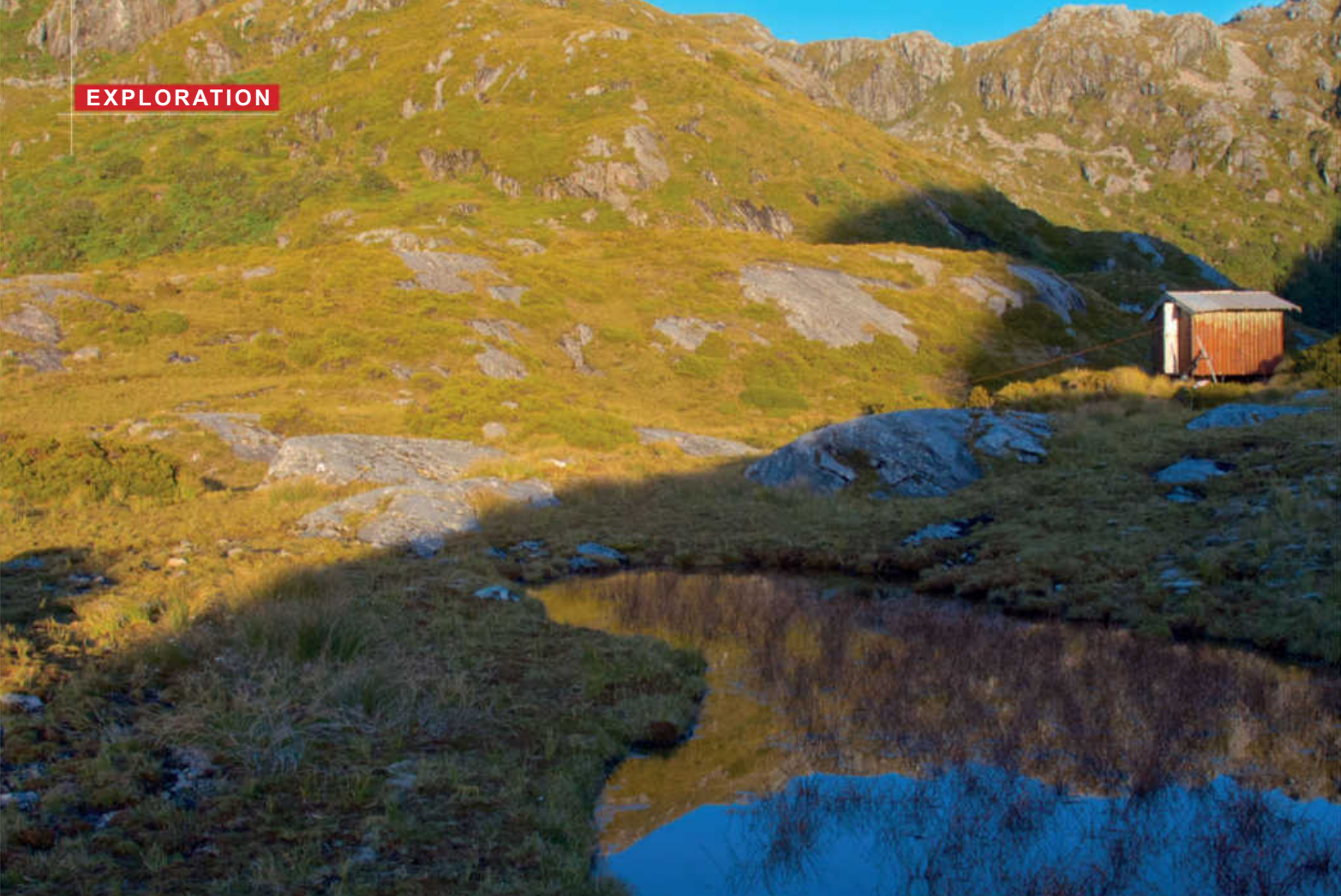
In another downpour at base camp, which lasted 24 hours, a billy was filled and the makeshift rain gauge overflowed after 30cm of rain overnight. At this time 'the scientific spirit was at a low ebb'.

The expedition was of its era – extending the forefront of knowledge. And Fiordland was very much a frontier then with 'yet to be explored' or 'unexplored' written over the few blank spaces left on maps. The main thrust of the expedition was to find the western extent of the takahe, and although no birds were observed, droppings were and the party concluded that any country westward was probably too rugged for the birds. Ernest Adams, the Canterbury baking magnate, filmed parts of the trip. Upon return to Wellington, I viewed some of his footage of amphibious aircraft landing on Lake Te Au and chaps with pipes in old packs wearing flannel shirts poking about alpine tarns.

In the Robin Saddle Hut book, there was an entry from Michael Abbott, who in 1989 took 130 days to traverse the Southern Alps south to north (Mick now contributes to the Out There column in *Wilderness*). Another was helicopter pilot Dick Deaker who set down his Hughes 500 five years earlier. 'I spent many a stormy night in this hut 1965-66-67,' he wrote in the hut book. 'Average day shooting was 6-12 deer. Takahe on terrace to the south of here then (under saddle to the Camelot)'.

The following day we decided to climb Mt Irene. Notes in the hut book suggested





Robin Saddle Hut was built in 1962 and is the most westerly of the Special Area huts

it was do-able: stay around 1250m above the bluffs and then follow the western ridge. But Irene resembled a rotten layer cake. At a point where we would have to drop to a basin before climbing, we decided against it – sure we could do it but it seemed like a four-hour jaunt just to return to where we stood. Instead, we skirted around to the eastern side where a remnant glacier was fast disappearing. Karl climbed a knob from where he could see Mt Aspiring while I languished in the sun before packing snow into a bottle which I wrapped in a down jacket. Back at the hut we had single malt slushies.

Afterwards, we had a swim, or rather an immersion, in a pool fed by the stream which drains the lake immediately outside the hut, and then languished on the sun-warmed rock. We got the rusted slasher into good humour on some dead standing beech, and a small fire on the rock kept us company. Two kea were curious about the flames.

Our evening, which had been shaping up so well, had a thorn in its side. Our mountain radio wasn't transmitting. We agreed that the best option was to head for Junction Burn Hut to maximise our chances of seeing a boatie. Our bail out option had been a boat pick-up somewhere on the shores of South Fiord. But that was tomorrow's problem. For now, we soaked it up. My question to Karl was how many had sat on

this rock drinking single malt accompanied by fire-intrigued kea while the moon set over the Museum Range?

In the morning, I set up the aerial in perfect configuration. We played around with batteries but it was a no go. We would head for the lake – and would have a spare day there in which we could strip the radio down. It was an easy morning to Esk Saddle with its outlook onto the gin clear waters of the upper Woodrow Burn – named after Frank Woodrow, a Canadian stoat trapper of the 1950s. In the valley, we crossed a flat and came to a deep pool. In we jumped to involuntary gasps. Much refreshed we started the long down-valley slog.

At the turn-off to Lake Wisely, we thought of heading up to Lake Wisely Hut – maybe there was a mountain radio or DOC ranger there? However, a lack of daylight and the climb known as 'Killer Hill' saw us scuttle downriver. A few evil gorges, one with a traverse above a slip, and massive windfalls, illustrated that few walked this track. The stoat poisoners – all contractors now – flew in.

Sodden ground sapped our legs and a biv momentarily raised spirits with its solar panel and aerial, but the radio wasn't there. It even had a squeegee for the floor instead of a broom.


Apart from windfall, the final three hours through forest were not bad. On the left, Junction Burn came in from the west. This

drains Lake Bloxham, where Dick Deaker was once trapped in a small tent. He had just arrived when the skies opened. There was no question of returning to the hut with the river up. In a wet sleeping bag he softened raw rice in a billy – it was '72 hours of sheer bloody hell'.

And there was the hut. I thought it empty, exclaiming "there's someone here" to the bemused young American sea kayaker as I swung open the door. He had a PLB with a GPS function which could send text messages. He texted his mother in the States who emailed Steve.

In the morning, we stripped the radio and, blowing through the transistors, got it working. Canterbury Mountain Radio informed us the boat would be there in an hour. We cooked up some lunch and coffee. Karl shouted "our boat's here". I threw the coffee out. It was a boat but not ours. It turned out to be the annual hut clean-up by DOC, accompanied by the local boaties club.

"This isn't Brod Bay," Steve said when he finally arrived.

Circumstance had conspired to take us down the Woodrow Burn, and while I may have hoped for it to have been otherwise I was long enough in the tooth to know that in Fiordland you take what you get, and just sometimes, what you get is sublime. A night on the Museum Range – or near enough to it. 



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The simple knot every out-  
doorsman should know

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## EXPLORE HERE

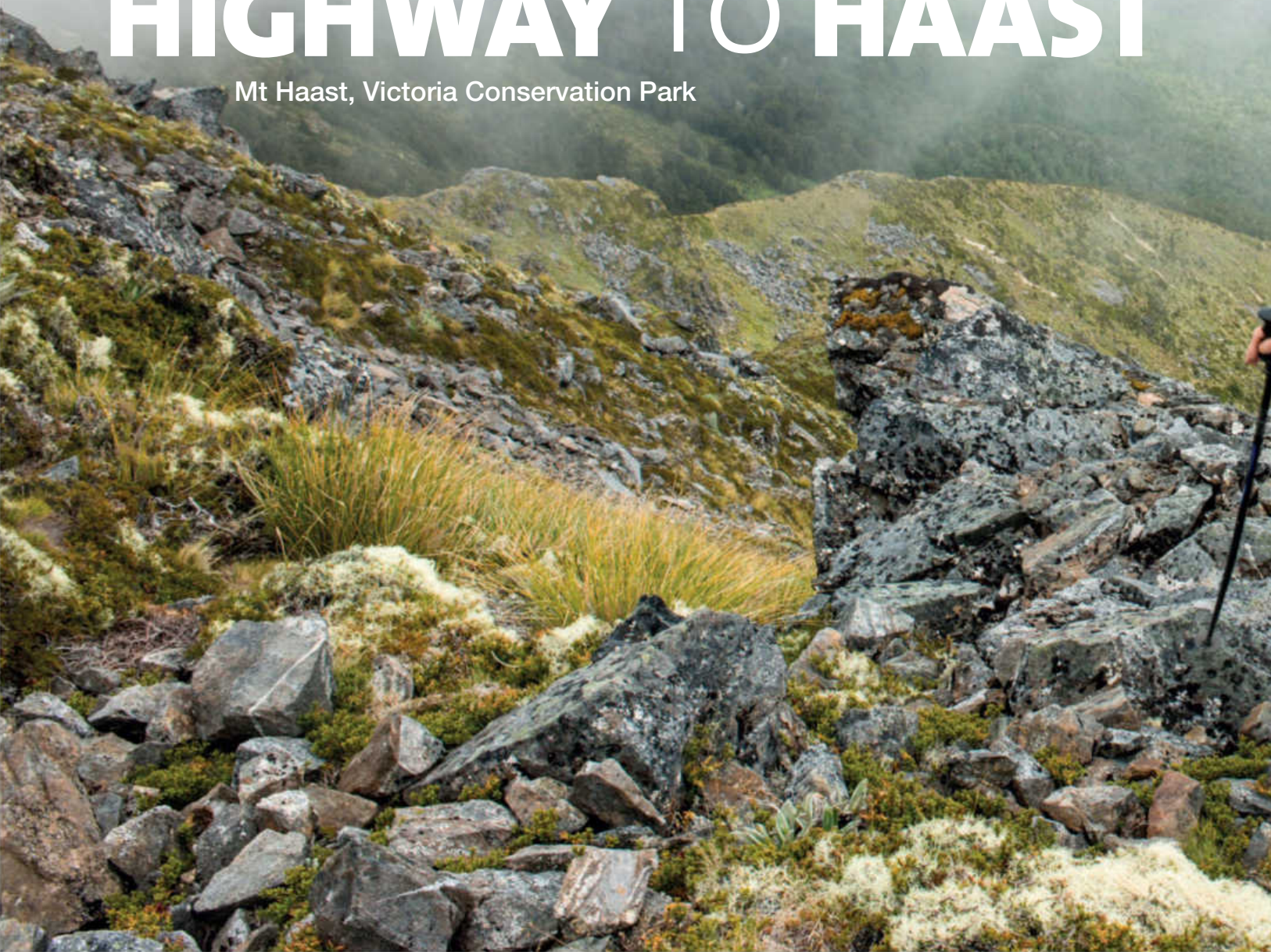
- 1 Mt Haast, Victoria Forest  
Park
- 2 Castle Rock, Kaimanawa  
Forest Park
- 3 Fern Burn Hut, Motatapu  
Station, Otago
- 4 Mahia Peninsula Track,  
Hawke's Bay
- 5 Banks Peninsula,  
Canterbury





# HIGHWAY TO HAAST

Mt Haast, Victoria Conservation Park



Approaching Springs Junction from the east, the large pyramid-shaped summit of Mt Haast rears above its neighbouring peaks.

For Bryce, Mike, and myself, making the summit was our goal for a day trip from Christchurch. It was a fair distance to travel, but with a reasonable forecast, the lure of the western slopes of the Main Divide was hard to resist.

Mt Haast is modest in altitude, just 1587m, has a track to the bushline and a poled route from there to the top. Some might call it a highway, but let's not presume too much – it's still almost 1000m of altitude gain from road to summit, and those metres get steeper as the top is approached.

But first the bush. An easy angled trail begins

right beside the highway just west of Rahu Saddle and continues at a pleasant gradient all the way to the bush edge. The forest is mixed and always changing, particularly when heading higher into the subalpine zone. Here, the crunchy fronds of mountain neinei – a flaxy shrub typically found at this level in the west – predominates, creating a carpet of decaying vegetation over the forest floor.

The neinei is a harbinger of the bush edge, which we reached soon after. Scampering up onto a tussock knoll, we surveyed the region spread out below in increasing detail as we ascended.

At 180,000ha, Victoria Conservation Park is New Zealand's largest conservation park. It's reminiscent of Fiordland with reasonably easily traversed tops surrounded by fearsome

battlements consisting of forest floor to bush edge bluffs, massive scarps, skinny two-boot-width ridge crests, truncated spurs and alpine cirques. All of which are features of past glaciation and it's what makes a visual examination of the area so arresting.

The ridge crest steepens and narrows as the summit is approached requiring extra care where over-steepened gullies spiral away beneath the track edge. The peaks were gone – for the moment.

We piled up onto the summit, found a sheltered spot below some rocks and tucked into lunch.

I'd had ideas of continuing along the ridge crest where it forms a horseshoe-shaped boundary above the Rahu River, but with the route hidden in the clouds I ruled this out.



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Contact the editor  
for details



Nearing the summit of Mt Haast

Mike quipped that he didn't bring enough food for that option, followed by Bryce who didn't bring enough daylight. It was down again, but not by the same route. I'd spied an alternative: the south-east ridge of Mt Haast.

This option curves away from the summit and over a nice tussock ridge and bench followed by thick trackless bush. The first part was cruise country, with grand views and lots of photo stops where bluffs plummeted into the forest below. Then came the bush.

Open at first, we made quick time watching the altimeter, map, and compass for the best way. At 900m, we broke left, north-east, descending into easy angled terrain dominated by rapidly thickening forest, scrub, mud holes, and pole beech. A desperate hour or so of travel saw us fighting, falling, sliding, and crawling through

the mess, all the time regretting the descent route – well almost, until we fell out onto the road for a quick walk back to the ute. Mt Haast – maybe not a highway after all.

- Pat Barrett

#### WILD FILE

**Access** A signposted track 1.8km west of Rahu Saddle on SH7

**Grade** Moderate

**Time** 3-4hr to summit. Round trip 6-8hr

**Distance** 2.35km to summit

**Total ascent** 922m

**Map** BT22

Download the map and route notes of this trip at  
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For the best view of Mt Ruapehu, head to Castle Rock



# RUAPEHU'S BEST VIEW

## Castle Rock, Kaimanawa Forest Park

In my opinion, one of the best views of the Ruapehu massif is from Castle Rock, a fortress-like outcrop along the Kaimanawa Forest Park Walkway.

The name is quite likely locally bestowed as it is not marked on a map. However, finding Castle Rock is a relatively easy undertaking and within the capabilities of most trampers.

A 4WD track heading north-east leads up to a poled route branching off to the right, then beginning a short but steady climb in a south-easterly direction to the hinterland.

From here it's just a case of following this undulating route which parallels the park's boundary with land occupied by the New Zealand Defence Force; a fact you are reminded of by notices warning of live firing and that your 'person or your vehicle, ship, boat or aircraft could be stopped and searched'. The occasional thudding whoomph of shells landing also tends to act as a deterrent to any ideas of straying off track.

After a few brief spurts of ascent, you'll reach the open expanse of rolling tussock grasslands, giving opportunity for many stops to look back and admire the spectacular view of Ruapehu, Tongariro and Ngauruhoe in the distance. The higher the

track climbs, the better the scene, because initially the pylons of the national grid marching up the Desert Road are a blot on this stunning landscape. Once over a few crests, the views remain but the blots are hidden.

Don't be alarmed by the description of the track climbing higher. The overall height gain is only around 400m, and involves relatively gentle undulations for a couple of hours. After a short sharp ascent through a remnant of beech forest, the track emerges onto flattish tussock land with a few peat bog areas and the destination just 20 minutes away.

At 1450m, the rock formation, geologically of a metamorphic schist composition dating back possibly 175 million years and once lying on the ocean floor, makes for an excellent lunch spot with grand 360-degree views of the surrounding countryside.

The track does continue on from here, again following the park boundary, and heading towards the Otamateanui Stream, the Kaimanawa Remote Experience Zone and the Rangitikei River. No huts are available so tents are necessary for anyone wishing to penetrate further into this seldom-visited part of the park. Care must be taken not to trespass on defence force land or blocks of private land in the Ran-

gitikei area.

But for those on a day trip it is now time to turn back and absorb the glorious vista on the homeward journey.

A trip to Castle Rock on a fine day in late spring when the mountains still have a full covering of snow is an unforgettable experience.

- Barbara Morris

### WILD FILE

**Access** Car park on Desert Road, opposite the Tukino Ski Field access road

**Grade** Easy

**Time** 5hr return

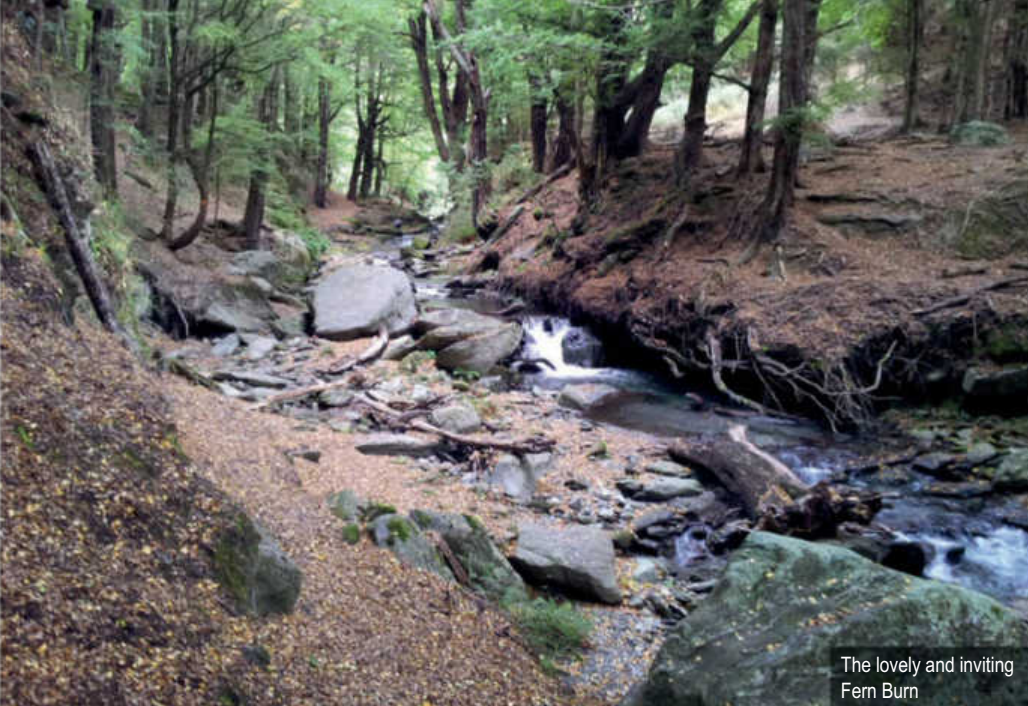
**Distance** 5.81km to Castle Rock

**Total ascent** 571m

**Map** BJ35

Download the map and route notes of this trip at [www.wildernessmag.co.nz](http://www.wildernessmag.co.nz)





The lovely and inviting  
Fern Burn

# A SLICE OF OTAGO HIGH COUNTRY

Fern Burn Hut, Motatapu Station, Otago

**T**he 30km Motatapu Track runs from Arrowtown to Wanaka and forms part of the Te Araroa Trail. An overnight trip from Wanaka to the 12-bunk Fern Burn Hut offers a slice of this Otago high country station.

Up the Motatapu I went, with the aim of a gentle amble to the hut. The walk in was easy going, although at times the track was cut into the mountainside high above Fern Burn, in a way that reminded me of the Kepler Track. The gradient isn't tough and neither is the time it takes to get there – around 2.5hr.

The start of the walk featured lots of cows. I had to shoo some off the path – carefully, as there were a few calves with worried-looking mothers. The surrounding terrain is mostly riparian shrubland and grassy flats.

Halfway up the track, you hit the 4144ha Stack Conservation Area, by way of an extremely pretty stream winding its way through the forest – a combination of mountain, silver and red beech. The Fern Burn is the ideal spot to stop for lunch. The water is crystal clear with a green tinge, which would have enticed me for a dip, were it not for the cold.

Soon I hit tussock country, with views up and down the sharp valley, and before long I had just one tiny stream crossing before a final grunt up to the hut.

Fern Burn Hut has no heating, due to

the almost complete absence of firewood nearby. It was slightly chilly but some hot soup did the trick and I was soon settled in for the night.

I noted a couple of mentions in the hut book about a family of 'active' and 'over-friendly' possums that live under the hut.

Later, while ducking out for a pre-bedtime pitstop, I discovered the possums were more feral than active. They were lined up on a beam above my head, hissing at me, with one even taking a swipe, when I tried to leave the hut.

Overnight rain turned the formerly pretty Fern Burn extremely dirty. It was not quite so alluring on my return to the car park.

- Hazel Phillips

## WILD FILE

Access Fern Burn car park on Motatapu Road, Glendhu Bay

Grade Easy

Time 2.5-3hr to the hut

Distance 6.36km

Total ascent 598m

Accommodation Fern Burn Hut, 12 bunks

Map CB12

Download the map and route notes of this trip at  
[www.wildernessmag.co.nz](http://www.wildernessmag.co.nz)

## SERIOUS KIT FOR SERIOUS SITUATIONS

Four girls (including a visiting British colleague of one of the girls) went up onto the Kelly range to Carroll Hut. The weekend had a pretty bad weather forecast and they got to the hut early when the weather was OK just a strong westerly wind.

They then went for an additional walk, the girls then went back to the hut and the Brit went for a longer walk along to Rangipo behind Kelly Hill. On his way back he got caught by the front as it came through on the side of Kelly Hill and he lost his way in the poor visibility. He had to spend the night out on the Kelly Range. In the morning he still could not see anything and the weather was getting worse. He did hear the train down in the Otira Valley so he just went straight downhill to Kelly River and then out to the road end, where the West Coast rescue helicopter was waiting for the girls who had beaten a retreat also due to the weather and activated their Fastfind PLB. So a happy ending for all, but one very cold and possibly lucky to be alive Englishman



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# LONELY REMAINS OF LOWLAND COASTAL FOREST

Mahia Peninsula Track, Mahia Peninsula Scenic Reserve, Hawke's Bay

The Wairoa Coast from Kinikini Road, Mahia Peninsula

**M**y half-day trip to Mahia Peninsula was in fact an unplanned escape from stormy weather. Gales had struck the mountains of Te Urewera where I was spending one of my getaway weekends and the decision to explore the peninsula made an exhilarating change.

The jagged seashore surrounded by white cliffs, so typical of Mahia, is well defined behind Wairoa town. Not long after I passed through a small local service centre at Waikokopu, I spent a while wandering on the beach – entirely covered by bone-coloured pieces of wood shaped and washed up by the tide.

I hit winding and stony Kinikini Road and headed up to my target – the Mahia Peninsula Scenic Reserve. Situated near the heart of the peninsula, this reserve represents one of the last pieces of lowland coastal forest remaining on the east coast. Its origin is connected to the Gisborne Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society which laid down its cornerstone in 1981.

Nowadays hikers are taken through the reserve via the 3.5km loop track, generally completing it in a couple of hours. The

starting point can easily be found alongside Kinikini Road.

If you decide to walk the easier, anticlockwise route, the initial steep section leads straight up to the lookout that affords an impressive overview of the land stretching to Hawke's Bay. The brown tones of the undulating countryside contrasts with the opal coloured sea; the depths of which hide more than 20 shipwrecks.

From the lookout the trail winds into the valley and is hidden by the lush dense bush composed of a large variety of plants including an abundance of rewarewa, kohekohe, tawa, rimu and matai. My favourite bush trees, karaka, cabbage tree and lancewood, are also plentiful and full-grown.

Gradually descending, I reached the bottom of the valley where I had to make multiple crossings of the meandering stream. This is the only tricky part of an otherwise well arranged track.

Approximately two thirds of the way along the track there's a clearing with a picnic table surrounded by a rich nikau stand. It's a peaceful spot to relax before commencing the final ascent back to the gate.

After leaving the reserve, consider staying on Kinikini Road and continuing towards Long Point, formerly known for its nearby whaling station. The road offers numerous outlooks over the dramatic slopes descending to the sea.

- Petra Dawson

## WILD FILE

**Access** Kinikini Road, 7km south of Mahia Beach, near Gisborne

**Grade** Easy

**Time** 1.5-2.5hr

**Distance** 3.62km

**Total ascent** 236m

**Map** BJ43

Download the map and route notes of this trip at [www.wildernessmag.co.nz](http://www.wildernessmag.co.nz)



# BANKS PENINSULA

## CANTERBURY

**L**ike a giant thumb, Banks Peninsula juts 30km into the Pacific Ocean from the Canterbury coastline creating its own climate and a unique habitat.

Two giant calderas, now open to the sea, have been formed here by the collapsed cones of the Lyttelton and Akaroa volcanoes which it is estimated once reached well over 1500m. Before the arrival of Maori, and later Europeans, the landscape was almost entirely covered in forest and teeming with birdlife. Now, however, there are only remnant forests, most of which are contained in protected native reserves and form part of the intrinsic appeal of a visit to the peninsula, along with the many short trails which link them to the Summit Road and the additional coastal trails that provide access to various beaches and headlands.

Add in sea kayaking, rock scrambling, fossicking, picnicking, and camping and you have the perfect weekend escape destination just 90 minutes from Christchurch.

- Pat Barrett

### 1 Mt Herbert

At 919m, the peninsula's highest summit can be climbed from north, south, east or west, mostly on marked trails. A small day shelter is located on its south-west side overlooking Lyttelton Harbour. Summit views stretch from the Seaward Kaikouras to Aoraki/Mt Cook.

### 2 Mt Bradley

Nearby Mt Bradley, 855m, is the second highest summit and is guarded by a ring of volcanic bluffs requiring some dexterity to scramble through. A traverse of both peaks can be done in a long day.

### 3 Packhorse Hut

This historic stone shelter has been turned into a tramping hut and is popular with weekend walkers for its grand views of the harbour and plains. It also has several approach tracks and could be used for accommodation during a traverse of the high peaks. Bookings are required through DOC's booking system.

### 4 Otepatotu Reserve and Lavericks

Located between Le Bons Bay and the head of Akaroa Harbour, Otepatotu



Sign of the Packhorse Hut

Reserve is typical of the many native reserves which dot Banks Peninsula. Small, tracked and with roadside picnic area and viewpoints, these forested reserves show what the peninsula would have been like in bygone days.

### 5 Okains Bay

Perhaps the region's most well-known ocean beach. It has a large and flat sandy shore with adjacent campsite. Nearby is the Maori and Colonial Museum. The bay is quiet and isolated except during Waitangi Weekend when a waka landing and recognition of the treaty is enacted.

### 6 Akaroa Harbour

Any visit to the Peninsula should include a closer 'sea-view' of the beautiful harbour, preferably by kayak. Adventurers can ride the ocean swells, check out the latest foreign vessels, inspect sea caves and gape at the massive volcanic headlands that guard the harbour. You may even spot Hector's dolphin or migrating orca.

### 7 Nikau Palm Gully

A small yet spectacular reserve located inside Akaroa Harbour, this beautiful remnant is a habitat for nikau palms which reach their southernmost limit here. There is a short track into the reserve.

### 8 Dan Rogers Bluff

Another small reserve and home to several native bird species including the little white flippered penguin. The reserve is bordered by the peninsula's highest sea cliffs, Dan Rogers Bluff (275m).

### 9 Hinewai Reserve

A private nature reserve, well tracked and containing an information centre, Hinewai has become a showcase for what is achievable for conservation within the peninsula environs.

### 10 Onawe Peninsula

This beautiful peninsula is volcanic in origin and provides a fascinating lesson into the geologic and pre-European history of the region. It was once the site of a Maori pa and some of the excavations and fortifications can still be seen.

### 11 Spine of the Lizard

This walkway over the summits of Banks Peninsula from Mt Sinclair, near Hilltop, to Mt Herbert, and on to either Gebbies Pass, Orton Bradley, Port Levy Saddle or Diamond Harbour in Lyttelton Harbour, has been named Spine of the Lizard. It's spectacular and traverses several native reserves.



**BANKS  
PENINSULA**

**CHRISTCHURCH**









# THREE SEASON BOOTS

Day and weekend trips require a lightweight boot capable of providing support over mixed terrain often while wearing a mid-weight pack. Look for a good fit, stable platform and grippy sole.

## MERRELL CAPRA MID GTX

\$349

SO LIGHT ON your feet you hardly know you're wearing them, the Capra Mid is an immediately comfortable medium-duty walking boot. Weighing just 907g a pair, they come with a fully synthetic upper of heavy duty mesh with an exoskeleton of rubber to give support and to draw the foot into the heel cup.

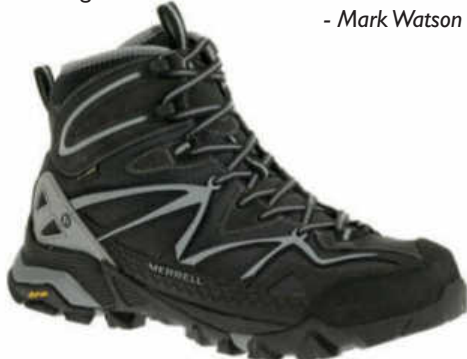
The lacing is positive and a minimum of padding combined with a low-profile fit makes them feel secure around the ankle area. I liked the small neoprene cuff at the top of the boot; it closes neatly around the ankle and keeps stones and twigs out when you're not wearing gaiters.

The Gore-Tex lined uppers are well bonded to a Vibram sole that had great grip on rock. But while the sole has a reasonable heel and good lugs on the edges, I found the very open tread pattern of flared (rather than right angled) blocks not so good on really slippery tracks – but on the upside it clears mud well.

The boots have pretty good forefoot stiffness, but they're quite bendy across the boot forward of the arch. While this means out-of-the-box comfort, it can also mean harder work for your feet with a heavier pack on your back, especially on rough ground.

The Capra Mid is a boot for those with narrow feet and would make a good all-round walking boot for easy-to-medium tracks, preferably with a daypack or light overnight load.

- Mark Watson



### SCORE

VALUE	3/5
WEIGHT	5/5
COMFORT	4/5
FEATURES	4/5
IN USE	3/5
OVERALL	3.8/5



## SALOMON XA PRO MID GTX

\$349

DESIGNED WITH AGILITY and stability in mind while still providing a modicum of ankle support, the XA Pro Mid is a top quality lightweight – 950g – tramping boot. Sitting in the same category as the Merrell Capra, the XA Pro Mid is a slightly wider fitting boot, has more padding around the ankle area and is built on Salomon's 3D Chassis – a reasonably stiff midsole and outsole combination.

Where the Capra Mid is a little twisty and flexible, the XA Pro Mid has a burlier feel and supports the feet on rougher terrain well, although it's still not a boot I'd choose for rough travel with a heavy load. If you're looking for a light boot for day tramps and overnights, it's a good choice.

In use, I found the boots comfortable with little breaking in required. They're stiff enough to protect the foot from stones and support the muscles well, but are flexible and padded enough to be comfortable on graded paths and roads. There's not much of a heel on the sole, but lots of sharply angled tread blocks provide good bite on most surfaces. The sole rubber is on the soft side, which adds to comfort and malleability for grip on rocks, but won't last as long as a harder rubber.

I really liked the speed-lacing system; an arrangement of thin, tight weave cord running through low-friction eyelets. Pull on the cord-lock to tighten the laces. It doesn't come undone and the foot is firmly and evenly secured. The leftover cord can be tucked under a neoprene flap on the tongue.

The only thing I don't like about these boots is the amount of stitching at a critical flex point. This will be a point of early wear, so for this they lose a few points.

### SCORE

VALUE	3.5/5
WEIGHT	4.5/5
COMFORT	4/5
FEATURES	4.5/5
IN USE	4/5
OVERALL	4.1/5

## KEEN DURAND MID WP

\$359.99

ONE OF THE sturdiest of the three season boots reviewed, the Durand is suited to both day tramping as well as longer overnight walks on a variety of surfaces. Built on Keen's distinctive broad last, it's an ideal fit for Kiwi feet, as well as providing a stable platform.

The sole is excellent; comprising an integrated rubber toe cap and partial rand. The tread is aggressive and well arranged for grip on a variety of surfaces. This boot was one of the best reviewed in slippery and muddy conditions. While the heel isn't as distinct as it might be on a traditional tramping boot, it still bites well due to good tread distribution.

The uppers are a mix of leather and synthetic material, with a waterproof/breathable insert. Ankle support is excellent, and the foot is well tensioned into the sturdy heel cup by a webbing strap that is drawn tight as the laces are adjusted. A deep cut-away at the heel allows heaps of room for the achilles to move unimpeded, and I also noticed the heel height to forefoot height ratio is high; this gives the boot a good rocker and might alleviate achilles tendon issues for those who have a propensity for such problems.

I found the Durand a very capable three season adventurer and could not find much to fault; perhaps the only issue being some stitching in the forefoot-flex area that will probably be the first sign of wear.

It's a well designed boot made from top quality materials. It weighs 1270g (w: 946g) and is an ideal fit for the wider-of-hoof.

- MW



### SCORE

VALUE	4.5/5
WEIGHT	4/5
COMFORT	4/5
FEATURES	4.5/5
IN USE	4/5
OVERALL	4.2/5



## SALEWA FIRETAIL EVO MID GTX

\$349

IF THERE'S A specialist boot among those reviewed here, it's the Firetail. While it's a lightweight walking boot (m: 920g; w: 760g), it has some crossover with approach shoes and utilises a few features from that genre, such as a relatively thin and sensitive sole; a toe shaped for scrambling and climbing; a rubber toe cap, lightweight uppers (handy for carrying on a climb), lacing to the toe, and a tramping boot-style sole with an aggressive heel.

I found the Firetail to be comfortable for a variety of walking, but being quite a narrow fit they won't be for everyone. They're a low centre of gravity boot, with quite a thin sole, which I loved the sensitivity and stability of. They're reasonably bendy, so harder work on the foot when carrying a heavy pack, but for fast and light trips they would be a good pick.

The synthetic uppers utilise modern fabrics and manufacturing techniques to reduce seams. This makes them light and malleable, but in doing so reduces foot protection.

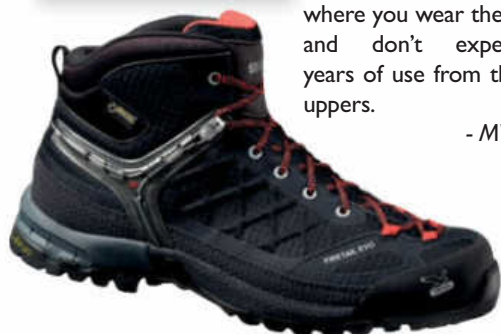
I liked the use of a rubberised aramid (Kevlar) fabric for the rand and have noticed this ultra-hard wearing material appear on other boots recently. In testing on moraine, scree and rocky tracks, the rand held up well and I noticed only one area of wear – where one of the laminated reinforcing fabrics is peeling away in a tiny section at a flex point in the forefoot. Some non-crucial stitching has also worn through here.

Salewa's 3F heel lock/ankle support system

transfers tension to the arch and heel when the laces are tightened, but it doesn't actually move and nor is it very tight, so most of the increased ankle support comes from the plastic reinforcing.

Recommended if they fit your feet well, but be selective about where you wear them and don't expect years of use from the uppers.

- MW



## GRISPORT HUNTER

\$299

STURDY, NO NONSENSE and a competitive price, the Grisport Hunter provides good value in a practical boot.

Thick, but supple leather, with a Sympatex lining and few seams result in an upper that promises to be hard wearing. (Though the exposed leather on the toe will show wear if you're a toe dragger.)

Due to the soft leather and flexible, sturdy sole, I found them to be comfortable with no problem areas. They weigh 1800g.

Despite having the appearance of a stiffer boot, the Hunter is actually quite bendy and I would not feel comfortable putting crampons on them. The soft rubber sole contributes to the immediate comfort and has a thick and blocky tread that offered great grip on a multitude of surfaces. The pronounced heel is the best of all boots reviewed for grip.

Quite tall, the Hunter provides excellent ankle support and generous padding making them secure when laced firmly.

Also in the box, Grisport supply a pair of spare inner soles, a tub of leather conditioner, spare laces, and a pocket knife with pouch; adding further value to what is already a very reasonably-priced boot.

A capable bush tramping boot, I'd recommend the Hunter for three-season single- to multiday trips.

- MW

### SCORE

VALUE	5/5
WEIGHT	3/5
COMFORT	3.5/5
FEATURES	4/5
IN USE	4/5
OVERALL	3.9/5

## ASOLO ATHENA WP

\$299

ASOLO BOOTS COME with a solid reputation and their grunty tramping models are a favourite among many of my Fiordland friends. In contrast to the heavy-duty models, the female-specific Athena is lightweight (700g) with a pronounced curve at the toe to 'cradle' the foot and distribute weight.

I have worn the boots on and off track tramping in the Rimutaka Range, coastal sand and rock at Wellington's Red Rocks and on a wild coastal cycle/tramp in the Wairarapa. In all, quite a range of different surfaces, slopes and weather conditions. That curved toe did the trick of rocking over the rocks while the Vibram lugs gripped every surface and cleared themselves of mud.

I found them delightfully light, while being sturdy and well constructed. The thin polyurethane midsole provides flexibility but, with an equally thin outer sole, cannot totally prevent sharp objects being felt underfoot.

The lacing system connects to a strap to lock the heel in place, offering a secure fit.

The stitched suede and polyester uppers make them highly breathable and I found the waterproof lining worked well through rain, wet vegetation and river crossings. The cut is full boot, covering the ankle, and they have a decent rubber rand that got a little scuffed on the ultramafic rock but protected the more vulnerable suede and polyester upper materials.

- Beth Masser



### SCORE

VALUE	4/5
WEIGHT	5/5
COMFORT	4/5
FEATURES	3/5
IN USE	4/5
OVERALL	4/5



# OUTDOOR KNIVES AND MULTI-TOOLS

Modern knives are light, razor sharp, durable and often come with multiple tools to help you out of any situation. By **Alistair Hall**

## HANDLE

The handle is one of the most important features. It should allow a sure and comfortable grip – often achieved through an ergonomic design that naturally fits the palm of your hand. When using the knife or multi-tool, the tools not in use should not protrude into the hand. Some handles also offer a textured surface for non-slip grip.

## BLADE ACCESS

Most multi-tools allow access to the blades without having to open the tool. One-handed opening is a useful feature – simply use your thumb to slide the blade out of the handle.

## WEIGHT

The more tools your chosen model has the heavier it will be. If you're buying for your tramping trips, choose a knife or tool with fewer functions. If you want a multi-tool to complement your tool box, then the more the merrier.

## SERRATED VS PLAIN BLADES

Straight edges are good for accurate and clean cuts – perfect for those cheese and salami lunch breaks – and for skinning animals or sharpening sticks. Serrated blades are designed for more vigorous cutting and for tackling tougher materials, sometimes even wood. A single blade that combines a plain and serrated edge provides the best of both worlds.

## LOCKING MECHANISMS

A safety feature built into most multi-tools and outdoor-oriented pocket knives is a lockable blade. This prevents the blade from accidentally closing when pressure is applied in the wrong direction. They are easy to operate with your thumb when the tool is held in a natural grip.



**Featured knife:** Victorinox Explorer (from \$89.99). Distributed by Ampro Sales Ltd, Wellington. [www.ampro.co.nz](http://www.ampro.co.nz)





◀ **Leatherman  
Signal \$319-\$349**

19 tools including survival essentials such as fire-starting ferro rod and built-in emergency whistle. Pliers, saw, hammer, wire cutters, combo knife, diamond-coated file and can/bottle opener. All locking blades, made in USA, 25 year warranty. 213g. [www.tightlines.co.nz](http://www.tightlines.co.nz)



◀ **Leatherman Wave  
\$279-\$299**

17 tools including four outside-accessible locking blades with one-handed deployment, pliers, scissors and large bit driver for switching bits. All locking blades. 100% stainless steel, leather or nylon pouch, made in USA, 25 year warranty. 241g. [www.tightlines.co.nz](http://www.tightlines.co.nz)



▲ **Victorinox Swiss  
Champ \$169.99**

Featuring 33 implements including a pressurised pen, saw, scissors, chisel, blades and pliers. 190g. [www.ampro.co.nz](http://www.ampro.co.nz)



◀ **Victorinox SwissTool  
Spirit from \$249.99**

All 26 tools accessible without opening the pliers. Implements include blade, scissors, chisel, wood and metal saws, various screwdrivers and more. 246g. [www.ampro.co.nz](http://www.ampro.co.nz)

▶ **Victorinox Rescue-  
Tool from \$189.99**

Features a seatbelt cutter, window breaker and a disc saw to cut through shatterproof glass, single-handed blade opening, each tool designed to be used left or right handed, made in Switzerland, lifetime warranty. 167g. [www.ampro.co.nz](http://www.ampro.co.nz)



▶ **Leatherman Wing-  
man \$119-\$129**

14 tools including spring-action regular and needle-nose pliers, screwdrivers, wood/metal file, bottle opener, can opener, one-handed deployment of outside-accessible locking 420HC combo knife blade and scissors, belt clip, made in USA, 25 year warranty. 198g. [www.tightlines.co.nz](http://www.tightlines.co.nz)



▶ **Leatherman Style CS \$75-\$80**

Clip-on multi-tool featuring spring-action scissors, file, knife, tweezers, bottle opener and mini-screwdriver. Fits in pocket or clips onto pack, bag or keyring. Made in USA, 25 year warranty. 41g. [www.tightlines.co.nz](http://www.tightlines.co.nz)



▼ **Victorinox Explorer from \$89.99**

16 implements including large and small blades, scissors, screwdrivers, Phillips head and a magnifying lens, made in Switzerland, free pouch, lifetime warranty. 101g. [www.ampro.co.nz](http://www.ampro.co.nz)



▲ **Gerber Suspension \$69.99**

Open frame multi-tool with spring-loaded pliers, Saf.T.Plus locking system, fine-edge knife, serrated knife, rough cut saw and more. Housed in a ballistic nylon sheath. 255g. [www.gerbergear.com](http://www.gerbergear.com)

▼ **Gerber Paraframe I \$34.95**

Minimal frame-lock design, open frame, with a fine edge locking blade, easy to clean, single handed opening, smooth stainless steel handle, clip for secure travel, limited lifetime warranty. 74g. [www.gerbergear.com](http://www.gerbergear.com)





# HIKING CLOTHING

Performance pants, shorts and tees for tackling any trail this summer



➡ **Macpac Fitzroy NZAT Softshell Pants \$249.99**  
50D stretch fabric, DWR treatment, fleece backed, 2 zipped hand warmer pockets, one zipped thigh pocket, Tricot-lined waistband with two snap closures, removable belt, articulated knee, alpine-boot-compatible with boot hook. 530g (m); 500g (w). [www.macpac.co.nz](http://www.macpac.co.nz)



➡ **Montane Super Terra Pant \$249**  
Abrasion resistant nylon double weave fabric, four way stretch, Cordura Hydro reinforcements in high-wear areas, triple stitched seams, front and rear zipped pockets, internal zipped security pocket, quarter-length ankle zips, YKK reverse coil zips, gaiter hook, UPF50+. 645g. [www.furtherfaster.co.nz](http://www.furtherfaster.co.nz)



➡ **Rab Wmn Vertex Pants \$159.95**

Quick drying stretch fit Matrix SWS fabric, double snap waist closure with belt loops, zipped hand pockets and thigh pocket, knee articulation, hem drawcord, UPF 35+. 279g. [www.outfitters.net.nz](http://www.outfitters.net.nz)

➡ **Montane Terra Pants \$149**  
Cordura patches in high-wear areas, articulated knees, tailored waist with repairable button fastening, removable webbing belt, hand pockets, zipped pull-out security pocket, mesh lined thigh vents, press stud ankle adjustment, UPF 40+. 340g. [www.furtherfaster.co.nz](http://www.furtherfaster.co.nz)

➡ **Rab Helix Pants \$159.95**  
Quick drying stretch fit Matrix SWS fabric, double snap waist closure with belt loops, hand pockets and thigh pocket, knee articulation, hem drawcord UPF 35+. 279g. [www.outfitters.net.nz](http://www.outfitters.net.nz)



➡ **Macpac Trekker Shorts \$119.99**  
Pertex Equilibrium fabric with 4-way stretch, removable belt, two zipped hand pockets active fit with slimmer leg, gusseted crotch, chalk bag loop, regular fit, UPF 50+. 250g (m); 230g (w). [www.macpac.co.nz](http://www.macpac.co.nz)



➡ **Rab Longitude Shorts \$109.95**  
Quick drying Matrix SW nylon fabric, button waist closure with part elasticated waistband, belt loops, hand pockets with inner zipped security pocket, key clip, zipped rear pocket, flat fell inside and back seams UPF 30+. 660g. [www.outfitters.net.nz](http://www.outfitters.net.nz)





↓ **Rab Helix Wmn Shorts \$99.95**

Quick drying stretch fit Matrix SWS fabric, double snap waist closure with belt loops, hand pockets and zipped thigh pocket, roll-up leg with hidden button, UPF 35+. 120g. [www.outfitters.net.nz](http://www.outfitters.net.nz)



↙ **Sharkskin Rapid Dry Longsleeve T shirt \$99**

Lightweight, fast drying, SPF50+ technical long sleeve T-shirt for during and after watersports wear. [www.sharkskin.co.nz](http://www.sharkskin.co.nz)



↓ **The North Face**

**Ampere Crew SS \$80**

Part of the Mountain Athletics collection, easy-care fabric, body-mapped FlashDry panels, polyester fabric. [www.thenorthface.co.nz](http://www.thenorthface.co.nz)



→ **Outdoor Research**

**Ferrosi Soft Shell Shorts \$89**

Abrasion, water and wind-resistant, stretch-woven ripstop nylon/Spandex fabric, low-profile waist fits under a harness, brushed tricot-lined waistband, front slash pockets, zipped rear and thigh pockets, gusseted crotch, men's and women's fit. 227g. [www.bivouac.co.nz](http://www.bivouac.co.nz)



↓ **The North Face MA Graphic Reaxion AMP Crew \$55**

Performance tee with moisture management properties, polyester fabric with cotton-like feel, Mountain Athletics graphics, drop-tail hem, locker loop. [www.thenorthface.co.nz](http://www.thenorthface.co.nz)



↓ **Macpac Warp SS Tee \$79.99**

Polartec Power Dry, UPF50+, flat-locked seams, breathable, quick-drying. 170g (m); 120g (w). [www.macpac.co.nz](http://www.macpac.co.nz)



↑ **The North Face**

**Ampere Dual Short \$80**

Part of the Mountain Athletics collection, FlashDry mesh panels, hand pockets, mesh boxer brief for breathability, internal drawcord, soft elastic waistband. [www.thenorthface.co.nz](http://www.thenorthface.co.nz)



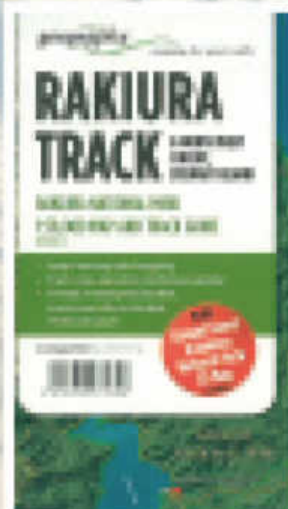


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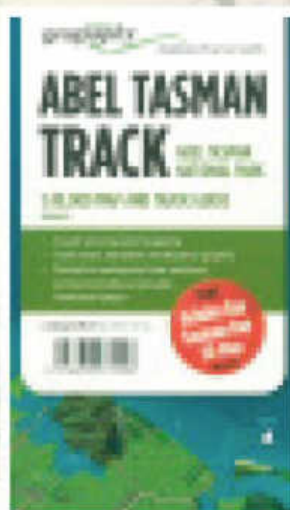
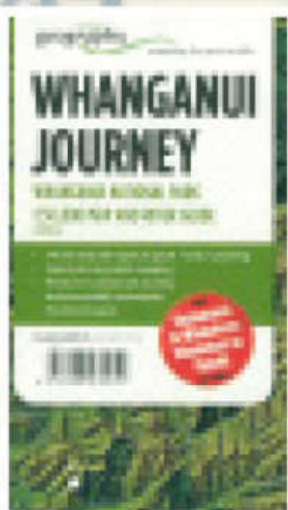
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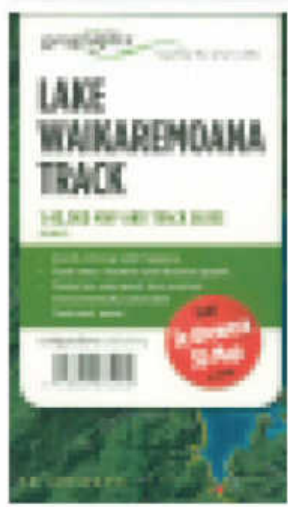


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# walking

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## FROM DOOR TO SUMMIT

10 easy peaks to climb  
from your front door

## HIDDEN PALMS

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Peninsula's best  
kept secrets

**Climb Great Barrier's highest hill**  
**+ Soak in Kaitoke Hot Springs**



# DOOR TO SUMMIT

## Ten easy hills to climb straight from your front door

Wherever you go for your next holiday or weekend break, there will almost certainly be a nearby vantage point giving you a bird's eye view of the surrounding area. Here are 10 hills where you'll feel on top of the world after an easy walk from the front door of your accommodation.

### Manaia, Northland (420m)

Above the sleepy estuary-hugging McLeod Bay lies a series of sharply rising extinct volcanoes that make up the Whangarei Heads. Possibly the most impressive of these is Manaia; its castle-like turrets and sheer southern face casting an imposing shadow over the town, with its numerous B&Bs. Luckily, a good track spirals to the top, making the summit possible in just over an hour from the bay. It's a steep grunt, but one that's both short and rewarding.

### North Head, Devonport, Auckland (65m)

Of all the volcanoes in Auckland, there can be few (if any) with a better view of the city than North Head. Poking out from the glorious old villas of Devonport, the city view incorporates the blue waters of the Waitemata Harbour in the foreground, while

to the east lie the copious islands of the Hauraki Gulf. Easy to access from Auckland CBD (a short walk from Devonport ferry terminal) there's huge historic interest here too with tunnels and guns built to defend the city from a feared Russian invasion.

### Mt Maunganui, Bay of Plenty (231m)

This climb shows there's more than surf and beach volleyball to this popular summer resort. Several paths lead either around or to the top of the hill – an easy reach from the very centre of town for anyone wishing to escape pizza-devouring teenagers or nose-to-tail traffic for a couple of hours. Though you won't be the only one venturing to the top, the large bush-clad summit means it's easy to find your own piece of seclusion.

### Brooklyn wind turbine, Wellington (299m)

Think hills to climb in Wellington and Mt Victoria leaps to mind. But the Brooklyn wind turbine can also be reached in just an hour or so from the CBD. This spot has spectacular views over city and harbour, and the climb can include Central Park, Polhill Reserve and can reap the benefits of the extensive birdlife in nearby Zealandia.

### The Grampians, Nelson (390m)

The highlight of this pleasant climb from the southern end of Collingwood St is the lookout just before reaching the summit, overlooking the entire Tasman Bay all the way to Kahurangi and Abel Tasman national parks. For those wanting a longer loop walk, the descent down the native forest-covered southern side is even lovelier.



View of Wellington suburbs from Brooklyn wind turbine

RUSSELL STREET, CREATIVE COMMONS



View from Mt John  
over Lake Tekapo



JONAS200, CREATIVE COMMONS

### Mt John, Lake Tekapo (1031m)

Set in the world's largest International Dark Sky Reserve, the observatory at the summit of Mt John is magical on a clear night. But the hill is well worth the climb in daylight hours, too – giving a sense of the vast surroundings and the extraordinary colours of the lake. From the town, a track heads past the ice rink and climbs 300m to the top. Grabbing a coffee and caramel slice from the summit cafe is mandatory!

### White Horse Hill, Aoraki/Mt Cook Village (922m)

There are several walks from the village itself, including one up the Hooker Valley and the short slog up to Sealy Tarns. A shorter option is the trail leading from the DOC campsite

up to White Horse Hill from where a steep moraine wall plunges into Mueller Lake. Over an ugly moraine wall on the opposite side is a spectacular view up Hooker Valley to Aoraki/Mt Cook, with dramatic icefalls to your left.

### Mt Iron, Wanaka (548m)

Sometimes the obvious choice is the best. And you can't get more obvious and more rewarding than Mt Iron. In just an hour, and less than 300m of ascent, you'll have a 360-degree panorama of the lake, Upper Clutha Basin, the Pisa Range and Mt Aspiring National Park. It can be completed as a round walk too – all in all, a very high reward-to-effort ratio.

### Queenstown Hill, Queenstown (841m)

In a region where every hill looks too colossal

to manage in a morning, there is one track which will give you a bird's eye view in no time, without the need for a gondola ride. Starting on Belfast Terrace, the track heads through planted forest before breaking free of the trees, passing numerous information boards and an attractive sculpture called the Basket of Dreams.

### Harbour Cone, Otago Peninsula (315m)

Though not the highest point on the peninsula, the steep-sided cone is certainly one of the most striking. The walk up from Broad Bay or from Larnach Castle – both of which have accommodation options – won't take long but may take the wind out of your sails, as trails are steep. The panoramic views are well worth the effort. **CW**

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# WHERE EAST MEETS WEST

James Hopkins discovers a taste of the West Coast on Banks Peninsula

The view over Akaroa Harbour from Lavericks

I wanted to get out of Christchurch for a couple of days. My original plan had been the West Coast, but with an intense-looking low moving rapidly across the Tasman, I opted instead for a weekend getaway in Akaroa. I'd been to the town twice before, but the hills around it offer so many different walks, things to do and places to see that I could spend a week there and still come back for more.

In this instance, I wanted a taste of the West Coast denied to me by the dismal weather. Nikau Palm Gully Scenic Reserve offers this.

Nikau palms are the southernmost member of the palm family and are normally found on the west coast of the North Island and the north-west of the South Island. But a unique microclimate in a tucked-away gully allows this southernmost stand of nikau to exist on Banks Peninsula.

Accommodation options abound in Akaroa and the eating options are also plentiful. Many places have a French flavour – remnants of the area's cultural history – and fish and chips on the town's waterfront is an Akaroa must-do.

## WALK ONE

### Southern microclimate

Nikau palms are a striking plant; their trunks are tiger-like, their foliage tropical-like and they take up to 200 years to reach 20m in height. Some spend 20 years growing underground before the first shoots emerge.

Onuku Farm Hostel provides access to Nikau Palm Gully across private land. Courtesy has it that you pop in and see the friendly folks at the farm stay before you set off – besides, you won't be able to find the track if you don't.

Follow the wide, benched, farm track that continually amazes with its views out to the harbour. Part way along you will spot a striking reminder of the power of nature; a huge slab of rock has peeled off the cliff, leaving a massive brown scar in the face, and a trail of destruction as it bounced, rolled and slid down the hill, stopping just beside the track.

At Nikau Palm Gully, venture right through to the clearing on the far side – this provides a great viewpoint back across the gully.

**Access** From Hamiltons Road – the DOC sign is at the entrance to Onuku Farm Hostel

**Grade** Easy

**Time** 4-6hr

**Map** BY25

**Further information** Permission required to cross private land. Phone Onuku Farm Hostel: (03) 304 7066

## WALK TWO

### Wide-ranging viewpoint

An excellent little walk, easily achieved on your journey home from Akaroa, is a climb of Lavericks, 755m, directly from Summit Road.

Situated in Otepatotu Reserve, it's only 1.5km each way but involves a steady climb through stunning forest.

After just a few hundred metres you're rewarded with an amazing rocky viewpoint. This alone is worth the short walk; from here you can see Akaroa Harbour including Onawe Pa, a narrow kilometre-long peninsula entirely surrounded by water save a very narrow rocky causeway.

Continuing up the track, the bush feels more and more 'West Coast' with an abundance of ferns and mosses. As you near Lavericks peak you may hear what sounds like a helicopter idling. It is in fact a small wind turbine, likely





Lunch stop on the way to Nikau Palm Gully

spinning furiously in the stiff easterly breeze. This turbine is coupled to a utility shed which also sports a solar array – all feeding a transmission site (good cell phone coverage if you want to post a selfie from here!).

From the summit viewpoint, follow the loop track alongside the fence, almost directly underneath the wind turbine. You will be rewarded with more amazing bush back to the car.

**Access** Small car park off Summit Road between Okains Bay and Le Bons Bay roads

**Grade** Easy

**Time** 1 hour return

**Map** BX25



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# GREAT BARRIER ISLAND

**Fenella Christian** describes how easy it is to fall in love with this beautiful island in the Hauraki Gulf

View from Mt Hobson

In the early 1970s my boyfriend and I holidayed on Great Barrier Island. By our second day we were completely hooked. We fell in love with the island and decided to buy land there. We felt there was nowhere else in the world we wanted to live.

So, in the days of youthful dreams, few roads, few people and no money we moved to the island to build a home, develop a garden and raise our children. It was a true pioneering adventure. After 43 years and three children, we're still on the island, living in paradise.

So what keeps us here? The breathtaking beauty of the place and the people. The landscapes are so rich and varied. The east coast

has stunning white sand beaches, fringed with pohutukawa. On the west coast, hills cloaked in native bush meet the sea in a maze of bays, fjords and islands. The hills, bluffs and ridges rise 627m to the summit of Mt Hobson. There are kauri, rimu and kahikatea. Flying above the forest canopy are large kaka – the distinctive call of this noisy native parrot is the sound of the island.

And there are the people. The island's permanent population is around 950. Even if you stay just a couple of nights, you can touch the island's raw energy. The perfect walking weekend on Great Barrier would involve Mt Hobson and Kaitoke Hot Springs.

## **WALK ONE** Climb the highest mountain

Stunning views are the reward for climbing Mt Hobson. Take the shortest and easiest route up Palmers Track. Climb the wooden steps through the sheer rock faces of Windy Canyon and enjoy the ever changing views. Looking north there's Okiwi Basin and Whangapoua Beach, to the east Kaitoke and Medlands beaches.

The track follows a ridge to the summit past the 'wooden horse'. This is a relic of kauri logging that took place from the 1880s to the early 1930s. It was used to winch kauri logs onto the ridge before they were dropped



down to the sea.

From the 627m summit, you'll see Little Barrier Island, the Coromandel Peninsula and much more.

**Access** Aotea Road at the top of  
Whangapoua Hill  
**Grade** Moderate  
**Time** 6hr return  
**Map** AY34

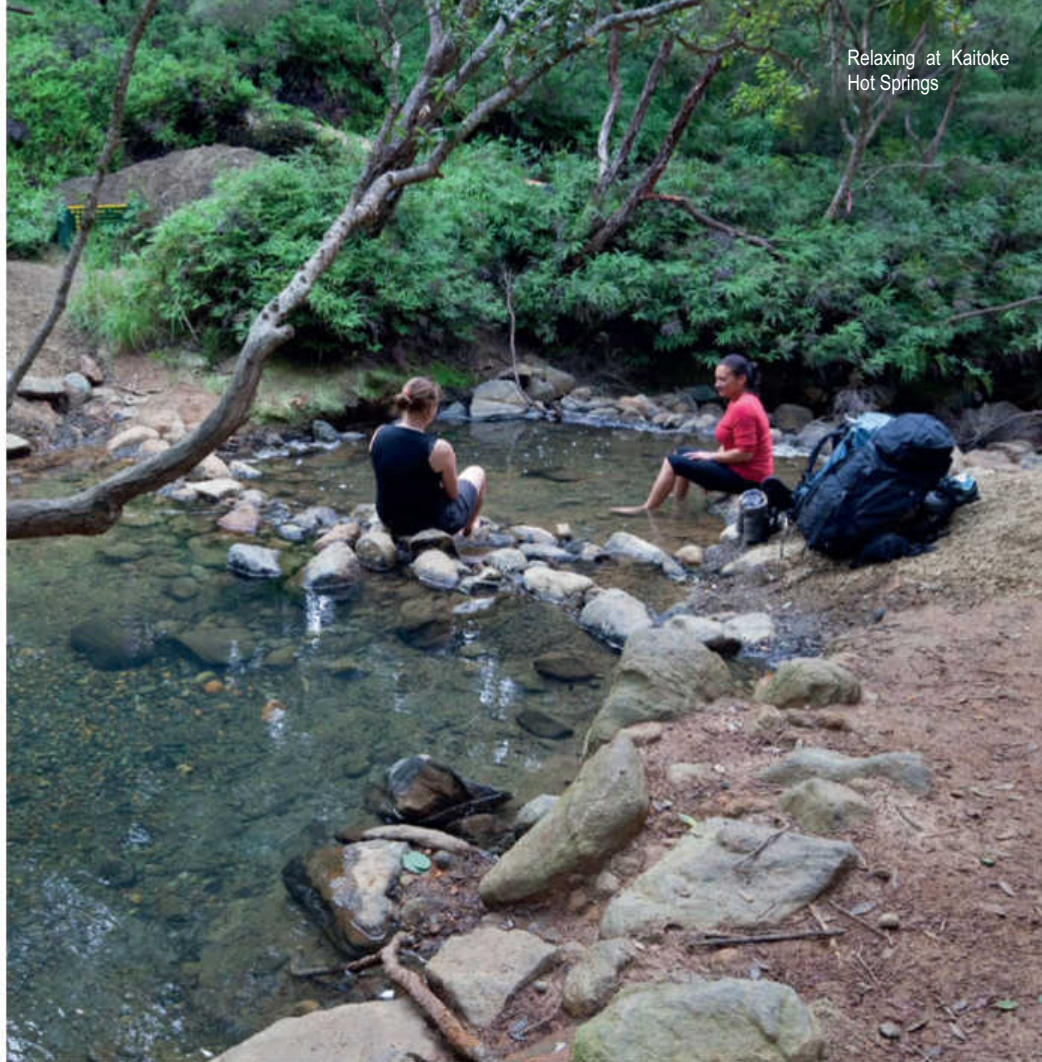
## WALK TWO

### Walk to a hot spring

After your big day climbing Mt Hobson, why not take a soak in the Kaitoke Hot Springs? The 40-minute walk to the springs is on a boardwalk skirting Kaitoke wetlands and passing through kanuka forest. Orchids and sundews flower close to the track. Keep your ears and eyes open for the sparrow-sized fern bird, a heron-sized Australasian bittern or the bright red eyes of a spotless crane.

The hot springs are at a fork in Kaitoke Creek. They're a series of pools surrounded by delicate umbrella ferns. **CW**

**Access** Whangaparapara Road  
**Grade** Easy  
**Time** 1½hr  
**Map** AY34



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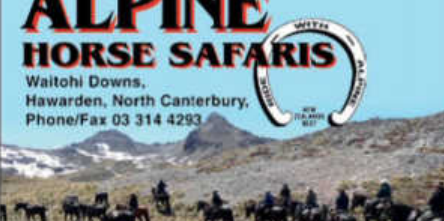


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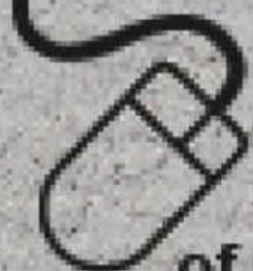
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# THE NEW WILD

Modern wilderness areas are not just hidden away in the backcountry – they're being made every day by volunteers and environmentalists, writes **Mick Abbott**

**T**ake the ferry from Auckland Wharf to Tiritiri Matangi Island and you're welcomed into a different world – kokako, hihi, tieke, takehe, pateke, kiwi, tuatara and more. Many of the country's rarest species have been released here and on arrival you get a glimpse of the birdlife that greeted the first people to set foot on New Zealand soil.

What's amazing is this change hasn't come about by protecting the place from the impact of people. Rather it's the reverse. The birds have been able to return to this island only because of people's positive impact on the environment.

Forty-five years ago, Tiritiri was almost entirely pasture. Then first an ecologist, then many others, made the journey over for a day here and a weekend there to plant out the 220ha island.

All up, 280,000 trees were planted. The nursery was then converted into the visitor centre, while volunteers found other roles including becoming tour guides.

If 19th century wilderness was something to be consumed and destroyed to form pasture and settlement, then in this century it's certainly the reverse, as we collectively play our part in growing the wild. And not just in remote corners but also those close at hand, in places where we live and also grow our food.

I was recently at Lake Ellesmere's Ararira Wetland where Robin Smith and Kirsty Percasky from DOC, along with 200 volunteers, spent a day planting flax, manuka, cabbage trees, totara and so on, as part of the community's efforts to re-establish native forest on the lake's shore.

The shape of the planting can be read in multiple ways – as a meandering wetland stream, an eel or an inanga. What's unique is it's not in the normal 'faux naturelle' arrangement where the goal is to plant an area so it quickly looks as if people weren't involved in doing the planting.

Rather, here on this slice of public conservation land, the positive impact of people is to be celebrated. Those who helped, including local school kids who planted an inanga shape, can come back and find the exact spot they were working on.

The form we've devised will also provide sheltered spots regardless of whether it's the easterly, westerly or southerly that seems to always blow. Also, it will act as a barrier to the willy-nilly tracks formed by off-roaders.

Further out on the Canterbury Plains, Ngai Tahu Farming is planting more than 700,000 native trees in a distributed forest that weaves through their Eyrewell development. Specific species are sited according to the function they can perform to support the farming operation – high density trees for shelterbelts, wetland plants and shrubs for sites under irrigation, and dryland kanuka for the many reserves dotting the farms. Combined, the 350ha of native forest planting creates a 20km corridor for native birds that bridges the forests of the Canterbury foothills and the regenerating bush on Banks Peninsula.

DOC's annual surveys reveal a historic mismatch between the activities done in the outdoors and the things most valued about conservation in this country. When the New Zealand public is surveyed about this, the activities in order of popularity


are: short walks, day walks, sightseeing, family outings, camping, hunting and overnight tramps.

Yet when asked about the benefits of conservation; protection of the environment, saving species, protecting our clean green image, and ensuring ecological sustainability top the list.

A pressing opportunity is to match these values with our activities. Indeed, while over half of New Zealanders say they have been involved in conservation activities in the last year, only a third of these activities have taken place on public conservation lands.

Conservation activities could be integrated with people's experiences in national parks. Imagine walking the Milford Track and each night being involved in maintaining a mini mainland island project. You could check trap lines, tracking tunnels and feeding stations so around each hut biodiversity was positively impacted because everyone passing through was doing their bit.

Out on the edge of Paparoa National Park, Conservation Volunteers NZ, with support from Rio Tinto, DOC and Lincoln University are doing just that. People are given practical experiences of volunteering that include gathering and raising seed, then potting the seedlings up and planting out. Animal and plant pest eradication is also part of the mix.

Over time, the goal is to return this 70ha site to a state where it will be incorporated into the national park immediately next door – to become part of the park not because it was locked away from people, but because volunteers worked to make it worthy of such status, creating their very own piece of wilderness. 



Volunteers planting on the  
shores of Te Waihora/Lake  
Ellesmere







## DAWN ON THE SOUTH CAMERON GLACIER

Not every day in the mountains begins, even in fine weather, with a soft pink glow that builds to a fiery and almost unreal orange dawn. On the South Cameron Glacier, en route to Mt Arrowsmith, the sun rose without such pomp or ceremony. But the soft light, on blessedly firm snow, did provide a great, more naturally coloured scene.

- Jaz Morris

Camera settings: Sony RX100iii, 1/500 sec at f2.8, ISO 125.



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